

# Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee



SOUTH  
KESTEVEN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL



Tuesday, 18 June 2024 at 10.00 am  
Council Chamber - South Kesteven House, St. Peter's Hill,  
Grantham. NG31 6PZ

**Committee** Councillor Murray Turner (Chairman)  
**Members:** Councillor Barry Dobson (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Matthew Bailey, Councillor Emma Baker, Councillor James Denniston,  
Councillor Gareth Knight, Councillor Robert Leadenhams, Councillor Paul Martin and  
Councillor Chris Noon

## Agenda

This meeting can be watched as a live stream, or at a later date, via the [SKDC Public-1 Channel](#)

- 1. Public Speaking**  
The Council welcomes engagement from members of the public.  
To speak at this meeting please register no later than 24 hours prior to the date of the meeting via  
[democracy@southkesteven.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@southkesteven.gov.uk)
- 2. Apologies for absence**
- 3. Disclosure of Interests**  
Members are asked to disclose any interests in matters for consideration at the meeting.
- 4. Minutes from the meeting held on 26 March 2024** (Pages 3 - 15)

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01476 406080

**Karen Bradford, Chief Executive**  
[www.southkesteven.gov.uk](http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk)

5. **Updates from the previous meeting** (Page 17)  
To consider actions agreed at the meeting held on 26 March 2024.
6. **Announcements or updates from the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members or the Head of Paid Service**
7. **Grantham High Street Heritage Action Zone Completion Report** (Pages 19 - 67)  
This report provides a final update on the completion of the High Street Heritage Action Zone programme, which came to an end on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. The programme was aimed at helping unlock the heritage potential of the town and assist in economic recovery within Grantham Town Centre.
8. **Corporate Plan 2020-23 Key Performance Indicators End-of-Plan and 2023/24 End-Year (Q4) Report** (Pages 69 - 85)  
This report outlines South Kesteven District Council's performance against the Corporate Plan 2020-23 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) from January-March 2024, and presents a summary of overall performance over the lifecycle of the Corporate Plan 2020-23.
9. **Play Area Strategy** (Pages 87 - 104)  
To consider the draft Play Area Strategy for South Kesteven
10. **LeisureSK Ltd - Progress on Actions Requested by Cabinet** (Pages 105 - 181)  
To update the Committee on progress made with the actions agreed by Cabinet in relation to LeisureSK Ltd and to provide information on alternative management options
11. **Overview and Scrutiny Leisure Working Group** (Pages 183 - 188)  
To respond to a request to form a Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Working Group to consider the performance of LeisureSK Ltd
12. **Performance of Leisure SK (Projected outturn for 23/24 - LeisureSK Ltd)** (To Follow)
13. **Work Programme 2024-25** (Pages 189 - 192)
14. **Any other business which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, decides is urgent**

## Minutes

### Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 26 March 2024, 2.00 pm



**SOUTH  
KESTEVEN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL**

**Council Chamber – South  
Kesteven House, St Peter's Hill,  
Grantham, NG31 6PZ**

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#### **Committee Members present**

Councillor Paul Fellows (Chairman)  
Councillor James Denniston (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Matthew Bailey  
Councillor Emma Baker  
Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing  
Councillor Gareth Knight  
Councillor Paul Martin  
Councillor Chris Noon  
Councillor Robert Leadenham

#### **Cabinet Members present**

Councillor Ashley Baxter (Leader of the Council)  
Councillor Richard Cleaver (Deputy Leader of the Council)  
Councillor Phillip Knowles (Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Licensing)  
Councillor Rhea Rayside (Cabinet Member for People and Communities)  
Councillor Paul Stokes (Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture)

#### **Other Members present**

Councillor Tim Harrison  
Councillor Graham Jeal  
Councillor Charmaine Morgan  
Councillor Ian Selby

#### **Officers**

Richard Wyles (Deputy Chief Executive, S151 Officer)  
Alison Hall-Wright (Director of Housing)  
Karen Whitfield (Assistant Director of Leisure, Culture and Place)  
James Welbourn (Democratic Services Manager, Deputy Monitoring Officer)  
Nick Hibberd (Head of Economic Development)  
Debbie Roberts (Head of Corporate Projects, Policy and Performance)  
Michael Chester (Team Leader – Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces)  
Jade Porter (Arts and Cultural Services Manager)  
Matt Chamberlain (Contract Manager, LeisureSK Ltd)  
Charles James (Policy Officer)

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**54. Public Speaking**

There were none.

**55. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Susan Sandall.

Councillor Robert Leadenhams substituted for Councillor Susan Sandall.

**56. Disclosure of Interests**

There were none.

**57. Minutes from the meeting held on 9 January 2024**

Minutes from the meeting held on 9 January 2024 were proposed, seconded and **AGREED**.

**58. Updates from previous meeting**

The Committee noted the updates from the previous meeting.

**59. Announcements or updates from the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members or the Head of Paid Service**

The Leader of the Council informed the Committee that positive discussions were continuing regarding the refurbishment and reopening of the Deepings Leisure Centre.

**60. Verbal Update on LeisureSK Ltd**

The Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture provided the verbal update. The Committee were informed that the Leader of the Council had written to LeisureSK Ltd requesting that their business plan be reviewed.

It was noted that other leisure facilities in the country had recovered to pre-COVID levels, but LeisureSK Ltd had not. It was suggested that LeisureSK Ltd bring a monthly performance report to the Committee going forward.

One Member suggested that a monthly, public, sub-committee be set up exclusively for LeisureSK Ltd with all members of the Culture and Leisure Committee. The issues surrounding LeisureSK Ltd were taking a lot of the Committee's time and a sub-committee would free up time to discuss other aspects of the Committee's remit within Committee's meetings.

The Monitoring Officer had confirmed that a sub-committee would be possible, if agreed by the Committee.

The Leader of the Council raised concern on the idea of having a sub-committee in public due to the sensitive nature of the discussions, such as employment and corporate plans, which would be inappropriate to discuss in public. It was further noted that quarterly meetings should be sufficient, rather than monthly meetings.

Other Members supported the idea of a sub-committee of the Culture and Leisure Committee to undertake detailed scrutiny of LeisureSK Ltd.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer recommended that the proposed sub-committee would be more fitting as a working group.

The Chairman of LeisureSK Ltd queried the type of information that was expected within the reports on LeisureSK. It was stated that it would take two weeks after the end of a month to compile financial data, therefore, the report would almost always be at least six weeks behind.

The Chairman suggested that the remainder of the discussion take place under the agenda item, 'LeisureSK Ltd Performance Report'.

## **61. Cultural Strategy Update**

The Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture presented the update report which outlined the implementation and achievement of KPIs, which had been previously approved by the Committee in September 2023.

One Member queried whether programs produced by community amateur groups could be included within the "what's on" brochures.

The Assistant Director for Leisure, Culture and Place clarified that community amateur groups were added to the "what's on" brochure as long as they provided the information before the deadline.

The report stated that there was discount offered on room hire fees to certain groups and individuals, if the circumstances were appropriate. It was queried whether Officers felt that the discount was advertised sufficiently to the community.

It was confirmed that the venue hire was a set rate but the Arts Centres could use discretion to ensure the price was not a barrier to participation. It was reminded that the Council needed to cover their costs.

The Chairman suggested that the Committee Members have a tour of the Arts Centres and meet the colleagues working within the settings.

**ACTION: For Committee Members to have a tour of the Arts Centres within the District.**

It was queried as to what the Arts Council England was doing to get schools involved in artistic engagement.

The Arts and Cultural Services Manager said that, as part of the project grant application to Arts Council England, there would be a public consultation that would gather information including the opinion of adults responsible for children of school age. A separate survey would go out to artists within the District.

**That the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee:**

- 1. Provides suggestions on any additional information required for future updates in relation to the implementation of the Council's Cultural Strategy**

**62. Draft KPIs**

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Licensing presented the report.

The Corporate Plan 2024-2027 was adopted by Council on 25 January 2024 (see Appendix 1). It was proposed actions, key performance indicators (KPIs) and targets would be developed by the relevant overview and scrutiny committees (OSCs), which would retain oversight of the performance management arrangements at a strategic level. Cabinet will receive performance reports on a quarterly basis. Scrutiny committees will also be able to take a deeper dive into any areas of concern.

One Member queried the KPI relating to attendance in leisure centres and whether this could be further broken down to gym, swim, casual attendance.

The Head of Corporate Projects, Policy and Performance confirmed that the break down of leisure centre attendance could be included within the KPI.

The Assistant Director of Leisure, Culture and Place informed the Committee that the information breakdown could be included as part of the regular six-monthly update provided to the Committee.

A Member queried whether there were trends available from previous years to compare and benchmark within KPI reports.

The Leader of the Council clarified that KPI metrics and trends had been put onto the Council's website. The next step was to put the information into an easier format.

It was queried whether a KPI could be included to reduce energy consumption in leisure centres.

The Assistant Director of Leisure, Culture and Place discussed future funding options for leisure centres, for example, the Swimming Pool Support Fund Phase 2.

It was proposed, seconded and **AGREED** that the Committee:

- 1. Approves the key performance indicators it wishes to review associated with the actions in the Corporate Plan 2024-27.**
- 2. Notes that key performance indicators will be monitored throughout the year as determined by the Committee in agreeing its work programme.**
- 3. Notes that the KPI suite will be reviewed and if necessary revised as part of the annual review process.**

#### **63. An update on the Hello SK app**

The Leader of the Council presented the report.

The report provided an update on the Hello SK app, followed by an introduction to the work of the Destination Management Organisations. The latter was explored in more detail in a report entitled 'Update on the Discover South Kesteven and the Tourism and Visitor Economy Strategy' which featured later in the Committee's meeting agenda.

One Member noted that a lesson learnt may be the lack of statistics from the app.

It was queried whether Officers were satisfied that Destination Lincolnshire would offset some features of the Hello SK app successfully.

It was proposed, seconded and **AGREED** for the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee to recommend to Cabinet:

- 1. The cessation of use of the Hello SK app.**
- 2. Instruct Officers to initiate partnership activities with Destination Lincolnshire to offset the features of the Hello SK app**

#### **64. Discover South Kesteven and the Tourism and Visitor Economy Strategy**

The Leader of the Council presented the report.

The latest STEAM (Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor) evaluation model data was reported to the November 2023 meeting of the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC). This confirmed South Kesteven had attracted more than three million visitors in 2022, an increase of almost a third on the previous year, with an economic impact of £218 million and higher than pre-pandemic levels.

At the September 2023 meeting, the OSC: considered the content of the updated Discover South Kesteven website; agreed to its live publication; and to receiving a six-monthly update.

To support the visitor economy sector, the Council (through its Tourism and Visitor Economy Officer), collaborates with partners, stakeholders and businesses at a national, regional and local level to promote the many attractions within South Kesteven to the wider visitor market.

Discover South Kesteven was the tourism brand of South Kesteven District Council. As previously reported to Committee, the website received an update last year which has been well-received.

The following data relates to website visits during January 2024:

- a total of 236 users to the site, of which 232 new users.
- average engagement time on the site was 1 minute and 13 seconds, which is strong as it shows people are staying on the site when they find it.
- engagement sessions per user were 0.69 illustrating a good return and a low bounce rate, which means more than half the visitors to the site are staying on the page.
- 94 of the sessions came from organic searches.
- 82 were direct visits to the URL (uniform resource locator i.e. a web address).
- 74 came from referral from another website.
- 54 came through social media.

One Member informed the Committee that the Lincolnshire coast had seen a recent uptake on social media. It was suggested that the Council work in conjunction with Lincolnshire coast authorities to increase footfall in South Kesteven.

Members queried as to why a specialist consultant was necessary. It was encouraged for the Council's Officers to set their own strategy.

The specialist consultant would be utilised to provide expertise advice on any gaps in knowledge the Officer's may have had, following the completion of the strategy.

The Chairman highlighted that the team would note the comments around the the need for a consultant, go back and reconsider whether this was required.

One Member suggested that Members be involved in the process of completing a Tourism and Visitor Economy Strategy.

It was noted that this strategy could capitalise travel links to London with further advertising.

It was proposed, seconded and **AGREED** for the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee to:

- 1. Consider any further additions or amendments to be reflected on the Discover South Kesteven website.**
- 2. Agrees to receive an update, at a future meeting, on the Destination Management Plan for Lincolnshire being prepared by Destination Lincolnshire.**
- 3. Agrees to the development of a Tourism and Visitor Economy Strategy for South Kesteven, which will align with the new Corporate Plan and the emerging Destination Management Plan.**

## **65. LeisureSK Ltd Performance Report**

The Chairman of LeisureSK Ltd presented the report which outlined their performance from August 2023-February 2024.

The report covered activities which had taken place between August 2023 and February 2024. Subsets had been created as follows:

- A. An overview of LeisureSK Ltd Operations/Staffing
- B. An overview of LeisureSK Ltd Community and Outreach Activities
- C. An update on the Council's Leisure Centres
- D. An update on the work of the Council's Leisure Team
- E. LeisureSK Ltd Performance Monitoring
- F. Leisure Centre Condition Surveys
- G. Quality Assurance

One Member queried outreach community activities that LeisureSK Ltd undertook and whether any discussion had taken place on cancelling certain activities to reduce the overall cost to LeisureSK Ltd.

The LeisureSK Ltd Board Members had discussed outreach activities and funding coming to an end. Once the funding ended, the activities would not be continued, however the Board were exploring ways to continue certain activities in order to mitigate costs.

It was noted that there had been 6 closures in the last 6 months within the leisure centres. It was queried what had caused the closures and whether LeisureSK Ltd had a budget for any emergency repairs.

The Team Leader – Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces clarified that a closure in Stamford Leisure Centre was due to a boiler failure which was awaiting parts to repair. Other closures were due to unforeseen circumstances, for example faecal fouling in the swimming pool.

The contract between the Council and LeisureSK Ltd set out maintenance responsibilities. Anything up to the cost of £500 was at the responsibility of LeisureSK Ltd, and anything over £500 or at the end of life would fall at the responsibility of the Council.

One Member queried the wave machine at Stamford Leisure Centre and whether it would be replaced or removed altogether. Concern was raised on the timescales of receiving parts to repair the wave machine.

It was confirmed that the wave machine at Stamford Leisure Centre was in the process of being repaired and was undergoing commissioning. Staff would receive relevant training following the replacement of the machine.

The current wave machine at Stamford Leisure Centre was over 30 years old, whereby new parts were not always readily available. Moreover, the wave machine had a completely new control panel built.

Issues around maintenance and cleanliness were discussed including the showers not being fixed and floors in the changing room not being cleaned in Grantham Meres Leisure Centre.

The Contract Manager for LeisureSK Ltd noted that showers and changing rooms at Grantham Meres Leisure Centre were an ongoing challenge due to the age of the building.

One Member queried the timeframe in which the wave machine at Bourne Leisure Centre would be repaired.

The timeframe on the repairs of Bourne Leisure Centre wave machine was unknown. The Council's Property Team were attending the next LeisureSK Ltd Board meeting to present planned future maintenance repairs.

Concern was raised that Grantham Meres Leisure Centre had seen an increase of the medium/high risks health and safety actions in the last three months.

The Contract Manager for LeisureSK Ltd clarified that following health and safety audits, recommendations would come forward which would be categorised into low, medium and high. Due to the financial situation for LeisureSK Ltd, all non-essential works had been delayed, however, those with an immediate health and safety risk had been dealt with immediately.

The annual health and safety audit figures included risk assessments, a walk round and training records etc. Leisure SK Ltd had set a benchmark in 2022, to achieve 80%, which was deemed acceptable in the leisure industry.

*(The Committee had a 10-minute break)*

It was proposed, seconded and **AGREED** to exclude the press and public at this stage of the meeting as it was anticipated that in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the likelihood that otherwise exempt information, as described in paragraph 3 of the Act would be disclosed to them.

*(The Committee went back into public session)*

It was proposed, seconded and **AGREED** that the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

**1. Notes the contents of the report and suggests any enhancements to the level of information provided for inclusion in the next Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee in June 2024.**

## **66. Sport and Physical Activity Strategy Action Plan six-monthly update**

The Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture presented the report.

The Council's Corporate Plan (2024-2027) identified Connecting Communities as a key priority. To underpin the priority, the Council was delivering on the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy (the Strategy) which was adopted in 2021.

The Council's Leisure Team was responsible for implementing the actions identified in the Strategy, targeting key areas, and working with partners to provide opportunities for residents and visitors to live healthy, active lifestyles.

The remainder of the report provided a further update and was broken into two key areas with subsets as follows:

- A. An overview of the work undertaken to support the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy.
  - Physical Activity Initiatives for Council Employees
  - Partnership and Collaborative working
  - Active Lincolnshire
  - Events
  - Proposed Amendments to the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2021-2026

### B. The Active Lives Survey

One Member queried what 'Street Tag' was.

Another Member highlighted that the Wyndham Park Visitor Centre was closed due to there not being enough officers to staff it. She said that it was a shame that the community was unable to use the centre.

The Assistant Director for Culture and Leisure clarified that the Wyndham Park Visitor Centre was now ran by volunteers with a busy programme of activities scheduled.

It was confirmed that 'Street Tag' was an app used to track activity and collect virtual tags and points. It was being rolled out to Primary and Secondary schools within South Kesteven, and then to all residents.

**In noting the progress and delivery of the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for South Kesteven, it is recommended the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee:**

- 1. Suggests any enhancements to the extent and clarity of the information produced for the next six-monthly update report.**
- 2. Considers the results of the latest Active Lives data available for South Kesteven and notes the results of future Active Lives survey data will form part of regular six-monthly updates.**
- 3. Endorses the suggested amendments to be made to the Council's Sport and Physical Activity Strategy following the launch of the Government's 'Get Active' Strategy and agrees to receive a draft of the refreshed Strategy at a future meeting.**

**67. Work Programme 2023-24**

The Committee noted the Work Programme 2023-24.

An update on the performance of LeisureSK Ltd was agreed to be brought back to the next meeting in June 2024.

One Member queried why markets were encompassed in the Culture and Leisure portfolio.

The Assistant Director of Leisure, Culture and Place stated that the remits of each Committee were set out in the Constitution.

**68. Any other business which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, decides is urgent**

A Member who represented a Ward in Grantham presented a report on the Grantham Market Public Consultation that occurred in late 2023.

**69. Close of meeting**

The Chairman closed the meeting at 16:50.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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# Action Sheet

Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Actions from meeting of 26 March 2024

Min no	Agenda item	Action	Assigned to	Comments/Status	Deadline
61	Cultural Strategy Update	For Committee Members to have a tour of the Arts Centres within the District	Jade Porter (Arts and Cultural Services Manager)	Proposed tour dates: Guildhall: Tuesday 2 July, 2pm Bourne: Monday 15 July, 10.00am Stamford: Monday 15 July, 2pm	To be discussed with Committee Members

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SOUTH  
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## Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee

18<sup>th</sup> June 2024

Report of Councillor Richard Cleaver,  
Portfolio Holder

## Grantham High Street Heritage Action Zone Completion Report

### Report Author

Claire Saunders, High Street Heritage Action Zone Project Manager

claire.saunders@southkesteven.gov.uk

### Purpose of Report

This report provides a final update on the completion of the High Street Heritage Action Zone programme, which came to an end on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. The programme was aimed at helping unlock the heritage potential of the town and assist in economic recovery within Grantham Town Centre.

### Recommendation

**It is recommended that the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee:**

1. **Reviews and endorses this report.**
2. **Is invited to share any comments they may have on this report with the programme board.**

## Decision Information

Does the report contain any  
exempt or confidential  
information not for publication?

No

What are the relevant corporate  
priorities?

Growth and our economy

Which wards are impacted?

Grantham St Wulfram's Ward

## 1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

### ***Finance and Procurement***

1.1 Grant spend and SKDC contribution across the four-year project is as follows:

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Total
Historic England Grant	£ 117,513	£ 160,505	£ 326,568	£ 68,133	£ 672,719
SKDC Match Funding	£ 3,637	£ 38,301	£ 121,858	£ 120,857	£ 284,652

1.2 The total public sector funding leveraged through the delivery of the programme was £307,734, and an additional £370,000 of third-party contributions were recorded for associated activity which was either delivered through the duration of the scheme or will be delivered over the next 12 months.

1.3 Further detail is given with the Background to the report (Paragraphs 2.35 – 2.48)

1.4 Services and materials relating to capital projects were procured and commissioned directly by the grant recipient. Grant recipients were contractually required to follow Historic England's procurement requirements for goods and services and provide evidence of this prior to receiving funding.

1.5 A grant clawback clause applies if a property which has received a grant is sold, otherwise disposed of, or significantly changed within three years of the final grant payment.

Completed by: Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer

### ***Legal and Governance***

- 1.6 The programme was overseen by the combined Future High Street Fund and High Street Heritage Action Zone Project Board (the Board), which includes Councillors, Senior Officers and Historic England.
- 1.7 Programme spend up to £200,000 was assessed by the Board which provides a recommendation for approval or otherwise by the relevant senior officer through their existing delegated powers under the scheme of delegation within the Council's constitution.
- 1.8 Programme spend of more than £200,000 was assessed by the Board and referred to Cabinet for recommendation to Historic England for approval.
- 1.9 Any project grant which resulted in a contribution from Historic England of £50,000 or more was referred to Historic England for formal approval.

Completed by: Mandy Braithwaite

#### ***Risk and Mitigation***

- 1.10 As the programme has completed, there is no further risk associated with its delivery.

Completed by: Tracey Elliot

#### ***Health and Safety***

- 1.5 Throughout the programme, contractors were responsible for maintaining appropriate health and safety on site and complied with all the relevant legislation. South Kesteven District Council was responsible for ensuring that appointed contractors provide evidence of Health and Safety competencies and supporting documents, including risk assessments safe systems of work and other relevant documents, as well as implementing contractor monitoring to provide assurance that works are undertaken in a safe and responsible manner.

Completed by: Phil Swinton

#### ***Diversity and Inclusion***

- 1.11 Eligibility for the grant schemes was limited by the terms of the funding agreement with Historic England.
- 1.12 To be eligible for funding properties had to be located on High Street, Westgate, Market Place or Watergate, (with a priority on Westgate and Market Place) and must have been built prior to 1939.

1.13 Applicants must have had the legal ability to accept the grant funding, typically the property owner. Tenants with full maintaining leases were eligible to apply with the written permission of the property owner.

***Is an Equality Impact Assessment required?***

No

***Climate Change***

1.14 The programme encouraged the retention of as much original material as possible. While this is primarily to maintain the historic fabric of buildings, it also prevents unnecessary use of new resources.

## **2. Background to the Report**

2.1 The delivery of the High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) programme formally falls within the Economic Development function of the Council, and therefore under the remit of the Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee (FEOSC).

2.2 Prior to the May 2023 the High Street Heritage Action Zone programme fell under the remit of the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny committee as a 'Heritage' programme. Given the prior involvement with the programme, updates have remained on the work plan of the Culture and Leisure OSC. The last update was presented to the November 2023 Leisure and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

2.3 The HSHAZ Programme began in May 2020 and ran until March 31<sup>st</sup> 2024, during which time it delivered capital grant schemes for restoration of historic buildings and community consultation and engagement activity to celebrate and safeguard Grantham's town centre heritage.

2.4 For ease of reading the report has been separated into the following sections:

- Section 1: HSHAZ Successes
- Section 2: HSHAZ Challenges
- Section 3: HSHAZ Lessons Learnt
- Section 4: Financial Overview and Added Value
- Section 5: Cultural Programme

### Section 1: High Street Heritage Action Zone Successes

2.5 The most successful element of the programme was the delivery of the capital programme which included the restoration of Westgate Hall, as well as the shop front regeneration scheme.

- 2.6 This element of the programme was responsible for the majority of the programme spend, and also generated considerable private sector investment in the scheme.
- 2.7 The works to Westgate Hall included significant repairs to the roof, and other works to prevent further water ingress into the building and rectify previous water damage in the roof structure. In addition, three of the octagonal rooflights were reinstated, historically appropriate doors and other joinery were reinstated, and repairs were made to windows, including the installation of new glazing to the front arched windows.
- 2.8 The project was responsible for £300,000 of grant spend and generated £120,000 in private sector investment in the duration of the scheme.
- 2.9 As a result of the project works the building, which had been vacant for over five years, has secured a tenant, Mr Ade Adeshina who has confirmed that following fit out works Westgate Hall will open as a restaurant in 2025, which will create at least 15 jobs.
- 2.10 Further repair works and the fit-out works will be funded by the property owner and Mr Adeshina and are anticipated to be in the region of £200,000 – £250,000.
- 2.11 Seven properties benefited from shopfront reinstatement or repair grants across the four-year scheme.
- 2.12 The shopfront regeneration project was responsible for £306,206 of grant spend across the four-year programme and generated £187,734 in private sector investment.
- 2.13 Together the direct public sector investment leveraged through the HSHAZ capital grant scheme totalled £307,734, which was over three times the initial target for the programme and exceeded the Council's financial contribution to the scheme. While the increase in private sector investment was largely seen as the result of price inflation within the construction industry, it is also indicative of the willingness of Grantham town centre property owners to invest in the regeneration of the town centre.
- 2.14 Interpretation and engagement activity created through the scheme has proved popular. Including the development of the Grantham Trumps card game and the Trigge Library colouring book have proved popular and highlighted some of Grantham's lesser-known heritage gems.
- 2.15 During the programme delivery Grantham was nominated for both the Academy of Urbanism 'Great Town and Small City' award, and the Visa 'Talk of the Town – Rising Star' Award. In both instances the work delivered through the High Street Heritage Action Zone (amongst other projects) was cited as one of the reasons that the town became a finalist in both instances. While ultimately, both were

awarded to other towns, achieving a place in the finals demonstrates the significance of the regeneration work being delivered in the town centre.

## Section 2: High Street Heritage Action Zone Challenges

- 2.16 One of the most significant challenges with the delivery of the programme was the rigidity of delivery timescales and the inflexibility of spend between financial years.
- 2.17 The split of the grant funding across the four-year scheme was determined by Historic England's requirements and fixed when the grant was awarded in 2019. The programme mandated that 80% of the funding was allocated to the second and third years of delivery.
- 2.18 The scheme did not allow funding to be transferred between financial years, and as such any underspend within a financial year was lost.
- 2.19 This was a considerable challenge, particularly with regards to the delivery of capital projects in the second year of delivery, when property owners were hesitant to commit to significant project costs following the combined impacts of Covid-19, and the impact of inflation in the construction industry.
- 2.20 As a result, there was considerable underspend in the capital programme in the second year (2021/22).
- 2.21 While it was possible in some specific circumstances to negotiate exceptions, such as drawing down Historic England spend early against project delivery (such as with the Westgate Hall project) this process was protracted and could be utilised only in exceptional circumstances.
- 2.22 In 2022, Historic England changed their policy with regards to programme alterations, and as a result programmes no longer had the flexibility to reallocate funding from areas which were under performing to new projects. This limited the ability of the programme to utilise funding where projects delivered under budget, or where the delivery was unsuccessful, resulting in underspend.
- 2.23 Historic England recognise that the inability to transfer spend between years, and the reduction in flexibility and adaptability partway through the scheme proved a significant challenge to all projects and asked that this be reflected in the closure reports, so they are able to effectively pass on this feedback to the Treasury.
- 2.24 Another challenge in the programme was achieving the desired levels of community engagement throughout.

2.25 As a result, the community engagement strand of the programme delivery underperformed when compared to the capital programme. While those who did take part were very engaged and reported that they enjoyed and benefited from their involvement, despite widespread promotion attendance at community consultation events, or other activities was low, and this limited the effectiveness of consultation.

### Section 3: Lessons Learnt

2.26 The HAZ was a great opportunity for learning, and some of the numerous lessons learned through the delivery of the programme are outlined in the formal Closure Report produced for Historic England, which has been included with this report as Appendix A.

2.27 In particular, the Committee’s attention is drawn to the lessons learnt with regards to the Shopfront Regeneration Scheme.

2.28 A common criticism of the scheme has been that the majority of the funding for shopfront regeneration grants was awarded to one or two larger organisations within the town centre, and it was hard for independent property owners to access funding.

2.29 In some instances, this was due to the significant increase in cost of shopfront regeneration projects through the duration of the scheme, which made projects unviable for many independent property owners even with the grant support available.

2.30 All potential applicants were offered in person support in understanding the application process and completing the application. However, following a review of the scheme during the closure process, ways that any future scheme could be made more equitable and transparent for applicants were identified.

2.31 The HSHAZ Shopfront Regeneration scheme was an open programme, with no fixed deadlines for applications. Applications were accepted for projects up until the point that all grant funding had been allocated, essentially on a first come first served basis for eligible projects. This was in line with the operation of the previous shopfront scheme.

2.32 However, it is proposed that should it be possible to run a similar scheme again the grant programme be run in fixed application rounds rather than as an open programme. This would allow all applications to be assessed on merit against the other applications in that round.

2.33 This would not only provide a better assessment of value for money and enable more accurate forecasting of spend earlier in the year, but it would also remove the advantage for those organisations more familiar with applying for funding or with resource to develop projects more quickly.

#### Section 4: Financial Overview and Added Value

2.34 The original grant award from Historic England was £886,538. SKDC committed up to £375,660 in match funding to the scheme, with an overall funding ratio of 70% Historic England funding to 30% SKDC Match Funding.

2.35 Unfortunately, there was underspend in the delivery of the scheme resulting in the total grant received from Historic England being £672,719, and the total value of the Council's match funding being £284,652.

2.36 The majority of the underspend was linked to the capital grants programme. As was discussed previously in this report, there was underspend in the capital programme in the second year of the scheme, as projects which had been allocated funding were not able to complete within that year. This was largely due to unavoidable contractor or materials shortages but did have an ongoing impact on the delivery of the capital scheme.

2.37 In addition, there was an underspend of circa £62,000 in the final year of the capital programme as one of the projects (80 Westgate) was not able to complete as the result of unforeseen structural issues.

2.38 SKDC were able to continue supporting the delivery of the project by utilising retained underspend from the previous shopfront scheme, however, were not able to make a full claim to Historic England with respect of the HSHAZ programme.

2.39 There was also underspend in the community engagement programme as the result of the discontinuation of the Conduit Lane development project.

2.40 Historic England's restrictions prevented developing other projects which could utilise that funding within the financial year.

2.41 The final grant and match funding spend across the four-year programme was broken down as follows:

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Total
Historic England Grant	£ 117,513	£ 160,505	£ 326,568	£ 68,133	£ 672,719
SKDC Match Funding	£ 3,637	£ 38,301	£ 121,858	£ 120,857	£ 284,652

2.42 As has been previously reported in this document, the level of private sector investment leveraged as a result of the scheme was considerably greater than initially forecast.

2.43 This was primarily as the result of the increase in the overall cost of construction works and materials which was seen through the duration of the scheme.

2.44 The total value of private sector investment leveraged directly as match funding to the scheme was £307,734 which was broken down as follows:

Project	Total Eligible Costs (excluding VAT and Contingency)	Total Grant Paid	Property Owners Contribution	Intervention Rate
74 Westgate	£ 49,031.50	£ 32,500.00	£ 16,531.50	66%
1 Market Place	£ 71,893.00	£ 32,500.00	£ 39,393.00	45%
21-22 Market Place	£ 87,930.15	£ 50,000.00	£ 37,930.15	57%
17-18 High Street	£ 110,273.00	£ 69,560.00	£ 40,713.00	63%
5 Market Place	£ 20,387.00	£ 14,463.00	£ 5,924.00	71%
68 Westgate	£ 29,700.00	£ 18,880.00	£ 10,820.00	64%
80 Westgate	£ 113,575.00 (incomplete - £25092 delivered through HSHAZ)	£18,631	£ 6461	n/a
71 High Street	£ 99,633.00	£ 69,672.00	£ 29,961.00	70%
Westgate Hall	£ 420,000.00	£300,000.00	£120,000.00	71%

2.45 In addition to the direct public sector match funding outlined above, Historic England requested that that indirect third-party funding also be recorded for the purposes of identifying strategic added value to the grant investment. This could either be investment made by third parties as a direct result of taking part in the scheme, but not as direct match funding to grant aided projects (for example, additional work which took place in buildings which had received funding, but which was not included in the eligible costs for the project) or other investments as a result of the development of work delivered through the scheme.

2.46 This figure could include both investments made during the scheme, and investments influenced by the scheme to be delivered over the next 12 months (until March 2025).

2.47 The total additional value achieved through the Grantham HSHAZ totals over £370,000 which includes:

- Westgate Hall fit out conservatively estimated at £200,000 – £250,000
- Private sector investment to shopfronts/ commercial properties (additional investment) between 2020-2024: £ 68,000
- Private sector investment to shopfronts/ commercial properties (additional investment) forecast spend for 2024/25: £74,000.
- Arts Fund grant to Grantham Museum Reimagined project: £18,600
- Woodland Trust grant to SKDC for street greening feasibility study: £10,000

## Section 5: Cultural Programme

- 2.48 In addition to the main strand of the High Street Heritage Action Zone programme, an associated community developed and delivered Cultural Programme was run.
- 2.49 This programme secured an additional £90,000 in funding from Historic England and National Lottery Heritage Fund. SKDC did not make a financial contribution to the project.
- 2.50 In line with Historic England's requirements for the funding, the Cultural Consortium members took responsibility for the development and delivery of the scheme, with the Council acting as a conduit for funding and administrative support, but not as lead partner in the delivery of activity.
- 2.51 The 'Cultural Consortium' group made up of Grantham Arts, Grantham Dramatic Society, Grantham Community Heritage Association (Grantham Museum), Chantry Dance, St Wulfram's Church, and supported by the National Trust.
- 2.52 The programme was of mixed success, some of the projects delivered including the 'Festival of Angels' exceeded the expected levels of engagement, whereas other organisations including the Grantham Museum struggled to deliver the programmes as initially planned, and as a result devised alternate projects which were less demanding to their organisational capacity, but which also delivered less.
- 2.53 In total, 723 people took part in events and activity delivered through the programme, over the delivery of nine projects, which included art/ craft workshops, dance performances, guided tours, and the creation of arts facilities in the town centre. Although attendance numbers were not recorded, it is estimated that an additional 2000 people visited the Festival of Angels exhibition.
- 2.54 Many of the groups found that they had a significant decline in their volunteer numbers following the pandemic and reported difficulties in volunteer recruitment throughout. This proved a major challenge to the delivery of the programme, and did reduce the capacity of a number of the organisations which took part.
- 2.55 Several of the projects resulted in a legacy which will extend beyond the duration of the scheme, in particular funding from the programme supported Grantham Dramatic Society in making improvements to their Westgate Hub, creating a rehearsal and events space which in the future will be available to both themselves and other community groups.
- 2.56 Grantham Arts were able to utilise funding to purchase equipment, including a kiln, which will become a bookable resource for other artists in Grantham, as well as

supporting the ongoing legacy of their professional and community arts activity, based at Grantham Museum.

- 2.57 Grantham Museum's funding purchased a new community cabinet, which will provide a permanent space in the museum for community groups, schools, businesses, local history groups and other local organisations to display the heritage which is important to them.
- 2.58 Discussions with other Heritage Action Zone Project Officers in the Midlands region revealed the delivery of the cultural programmes to be among the weakest elements of delivery for most schemes, but those which operated best utilised the Cultural Consortium as a commissioning body to direct the arts and cultural activities, rather than as the delivery body from the outset.
- 2.59 This was a key lesson learnt through this programme, and should a similar opportunity arise in the future, this would be the recommended method of delivery.
- 2.60 In line with Historic England's requirements for grant closure, a qualitative evaluation report was produced. This has been included as Appendix B of this report.

### **3. Key Considerations**

- 3.1 The High Street Heritage Action Zone programme ran from 2020-2024, and delivery was impacted by major events including the Covid-19 Pandemic, and the national economic downturn, increased inflation and cost of living crisis.
- 3.2 Despite this, the programme succeeded in achieving the majority of its aims and outcomes identified in the original funding bid.
- 3.3 The project highlighted the importance of Grantham's historic environment as a key driver of the town's continued regeneration.
- 3.4 Although this funding stream has come to an end, SKDC officers will continue to pursue any available funding to support the regeneration of South Kesteven's town centres as appropriate. The lessons learnt through the delivery of this scheme will be valuable in influencing how any future programmes are developed and delivered.

### **4. Other Options Considered**

- 4.1 As this report provides an overview of the scheme for the purposes of project closure, there are no other options to consider.

### **5. Reasons for the Recommendations**

5.1 The Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee has heritage as part of their remit. The presentation and endorsement of this completion report will allow for both the celebration of the completion of the scheme, but also crucially allow for lessons learnt through the delivery of the scheme to be acknowledged and noted for consideration in the development and delivery of future schemes.

## **6. Appendices**

6.1 Appendix A: 'Grantham High Street Heritage Action Zone Closure Report A: Objectives, Lessons Learnt and Feedback'

6.2 Appendix B: 'Grantham HSHAZ Cultural Programme Evaluation Report'

## **7. Background Papers**

7.1 *Update on Heritage Action Zone shop front improvements in Grantham* – Report to Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023: (<https://moderngov.southkesteven.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=727&MId=447>)



Form Name: HSHAZ Closure Report A  
 Submission Time: March 28, 2024 2:35 pm

## HSHAZ Closure Report A: Objectives, lessons learned and feedback

Report version	Final Version
Report date	26/3/2024

### Scheme details and contacts

Scheme name	Grantham
Scheme ID	HSM53
Name (of person submitting this report)	Claire Saunders
Your organisation name	South Kesteven District Council
Job title / role	High Street Heritage Action Zone Project Manager
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### SECTION A - Your scheme

Question 1: Did any of your objectives change from your original Programme Design to final delivery? (include those that changed and/ or were not met).	Yes
Which objective changed?	Objective 1: Revitalise the Historic Core, specifically : Public Realm Enhancements In the initial programme design public realm enhancements were outlined, which were to be driven by public consultation, but particularly focused within the Market Place.

**????How did it change? (i.e. in what way did it change from your original design)**

The original project design included funding for limited public realm works which were to be identified and designed via public consultation, but largely focused on Market Place and Conduit lane.

However, in year two of the programme this element of was removed and the funding transferred to the Westgate Hall regeneration project.

**Why did it change? (i.e. what circumstances led to the change)**

There were three principal circumstances which led to the redesign of this element of the programme:

Firstly, SKDC succeeded in securing funding from the Future High Street Fund to deliver a wider and more substantial public realm programme in the area of the Market Place. As there needed to be clear delineation between the use of funding the HSHAZ and Future High Street Fund, it was no longer deemed appropriate to use the funding in the marketplace. Secondly, the impact of inflation on costs for any scheme meant that the modest amount of funding which had originally been allocated to public realm would not have resulted in an impactful or value for money scheme. Finally, following an options appraisal completed in the first year of delivery, the owner of Westgate Hall secured a tenant for the building who was in the position to contribute financially for fit out costs and support the regeneration of the building. It was therefore considered that utilising the funding to support meeting the conservation deficit on Westgate Hall, and the completion of necessary repair works which would facilitate the long-term use of the building, would have a greater and longer-term beneficial impact on both the historic building itself, and the regeneration of the town centre, than a very limited public realm scheme could achieve in isolation.

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**Add another?**

Yes

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**Which objective changed?**

Objective 2: Reinstate the original Architectural form of buildings within the town centre. Specifically: Gap Site Development Appraisal (part of the community design framework).

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**????How did it change? (i.e. in what way did it change from your original design)**

Within the original programme design, budget was allocated to explore the potential for reinstating the original form of Grantham marketplace by the closure of Conduit Lane to traffic and enclosing the market square through the reinstatement of a building in the gap site created by the demolition of the Butter Market and Blue Sheep Inn in the 1950s.

This work included a feasibility study, heritage assessment and development appraisal. Considerable community consultation and engagement work was also planned, which would have included trial road closures.

However, following a change in direction from key stakeholders it was not possible to complete this element of work -although the feasibility study and development appraisal were completed.

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**Why did it change? (i.e. what circumstances led to the change)**

As the authority responsible for highways in the district, Lincolnshire County Council were principal stakeholders for the project. Unfortunately, despite initial support and encouragement to investigate the potential of the future closure of Conduit Lane, they later withdrew their support for the project.

Without the backing of the County Council, it was not possible to pursue the project further.

While delivering community engagement and consultation in order to potentially build a case for the project, however, ultimately was considered community engagement around the project, including trial road closures, would be redundant and would result in residents and businesses being given a false impression of what it would be possible to deliver.

As a result, further work on this project relating specifically to Conduit Lane was removed from the programme.

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**Add another?**

No

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**Description Area**

Question 2: Tell us about your successes and challenges. Our work together set out to make lasting improvements to our historic high streets for the communities who use them. The aims and objectives in your logic model were designed to achieve this and make the high street a more attractive, energising and vibrant place for people to live, work and spend time.

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**i. Which objective has been successful?**

Capital Grants for Repair and Reinstatement.

The delivery of this element of the programme supported Objective 1: Revitalise the Historic Core, and Objective 2: Reinstate the original architectural form of buildings within the town centre.

## Why has it been successful?

The shopfront regeneration grant scheme (project 3) and the Westgate Hall regeneration project (project 5) both fell under the umbrella of this objective. Both were successful in delivering change to the High Street, improving the quality of Grantham's built heritage, and preserving that heritage for the future.

Of course, the delivery of the schemes was not without challenges, and these are discussed later in this report, however the benefits of the project have exceeded the physical regeneration of the buildings themselves.

Through the delivery of the scheme, we have improved relationships between property owners and the Local Authority, and now have a regular and active dialogue with those property owners who received funding.

Some of the property owners who received grant funding have continued to invest in their building stock and the historic environment beyond the scope of the grant funding.

Buckminster Estates, who own significant numbers of properties within the HSHAZ, have increased their investments in the town centre. This has included carrying out repair works to other shopfronts which did not receive grant funding, making internal improvements within vacant units, and converting vacant upper floor spaces to residential use or improving the quality of existing upper floor residential spaces, supported street greening efforts, and have become more actively involved in discussions around further regeneration of the town centre.

Within the district of South Kesteven, Grantham's historic environment often gets compared unfavourably to Stamford, which often leads to the perception that Grantham's heritage has been lost or is of low quality. Throughout the projects we have drawn attention to the abundance and quality of Grantham's historic buildings, and highlighted how through appropriate treatment and maintenance it can be utilised to support the town centre, and be a driver for civic and community pride.

Tenants of one of the shopfront regeneration scheme properties, 1 Market Place, reported anecdotally that following the shop front reinstatement on their property customers had highlighted the improved feel of the shop, and a perceived increase in quality in both the business and their merchandise.

The completion of works to Westgate Hall, which will support the ongoing regeneration of the grade II listed former corn exchange, have prevented further deterioration of the building. As part of the project local residents and community stakeholders were encouraged to share their memories of the place, and as a result we gained a greater depth of knowledge about the affection that people had for the building, and its importance to the community.

Although works to bring the building back into use continue beyond the scope of the HSHAZ programme, the funding which was crucial to the successful delivery the initial phases of works, kick started the reimaging of

the building, and reconstructed its links to the community after an extended period of vacancy and increasing dereliction.

<b>Add another?</b>	Yes
<b>i. Which objective has been successful?</b>	Engender a local sense of identity and pride through exploration and celebration of Grantham's rich heritage.
<b>Why has it been successful?</b>	<p>The HSHAZ programme provided the opportunity for us to engage residents and other stakeholders with Grantham's heritage on multiple levels.</p> <p>What proved particularly successful were opportunities which engaged people with the town's heritage for the first time.</p> <p>Projects including the Grantham Trump Cards project which highlighted 62 of Grantham's historic buildings through a familiar card game format, and the Trigge library colouring book which celebrates the towns historic chained library which dates from 1592.</p> <p>Prior to the HSHAZ scheme, there was a belief among residents that the majority of the town's heritage had been lost or fallen victim to post war redevelopment. However, these projects offered an easy access way for residents and visitors to begin to explore the town's history, and feedback received often highlighted that these projects introduced people to aspects of the town's heritage that they were not previously aware of.</p> <p>Likewise, the introduction of a digital trail of the town has provided another mechanism by which people have been able to explore heritage within the town.</p> <p>All of these projects are long lasting and will continue to provide opportunities for residents and visitors to discover Grantham's heritage beyond the lifetime of the HSHAZ programme.</p> <p>While it was unfortunate that participation in consultation activities such as the community charrette was lower than anticipated, those who did take part gave very positive feedback on the events and commented that they were very appreciative of the opportunity to shape thinking about future regeneration works in the town.</p> <p>The events highlighted that there is a lot to be proud about as a Grantham resident, business owner or other stakeholder, but that it is incumbent upon the local authority to be consistent and positive about that messaging to continue overcoming local pessimism about the town.</p>
<b>Add another?</b>	No
<b>ii. Which objective has been challenging?</b>	<p>Capital Grants for Repair and Reinstatement.</p> <p>The delivery of this element of the programme supported Objective 1: Revitalise the Historic Core, and Objective 2: Reinstate the original architectural form of buildings within the town centre.</p>

## Why has it been challenging?

In many ways, this objective was successful, however it was not without challenges for delivery.

When the programme design was submitted a target of 12 shopfront regeneration projects was set, however the dramatic increase in costs for materials seen in the early years of the project, and the ongoing high levels of inflation which were experienced throughout the project meant that the originally planned maximum grant of £25,000 per storefront was not sufficient to make the works viable in many cases.

In mitigation SKDC secured agreement to lift the cap on the value of individual grants (while maintaining the maximum intervention rates), and while this did encourage uptake of grants, for some property owners, particularly smaller independent landlords the grants were still not able to meet the viability gap on completing the works.

Navigating the national shortage of suitably qualified contractors was also a challenge. It often took longer than expected for grant applicants to be able to secure the required three quotes, and when a contractor was appointed, there was a high likelihood that they would also be working on other HSHAZ projects elsewhere meaning that project timetables were often extended.

The strict end of financial year deadlines for spend also proved challenging to navigate and were off putting to some potential applicants who were less able to absorb any loss in funding due to an overrun in project timeline, which is not atypical when working on historic buildings.

Had it been possible to carry forward underspend into subsequent financial years, the grant programme would have been more successful and far reaching, and underspend would have been significantly minimised.

The required profiling of the funding across the four years of the project also proved to be a challenge within the delivery of the capital scheme. The requirement for the majority of funding to be spent in years two and three of the programme meant that some property owners felt there was pressure to apply when they were not ready to do so given the wider economic context, and therefore dropped out. Conversely a number of property owners missed out on funding as they enquired about the scheme too late in the programme, even though there had been underspend in previous years which could have been utilised to deliver their schemes if the majority of funds had been profiled in year three and four instead.

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Add another?

Yes

**ii. Which objective has been challenging?**

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Objective 5: Engage the community in the development or the town centre.

## Why has it been challenging?

At the outset of the scheme a comprehensive community engagement plan was produced by SKDC, however, this ultimately proved challenging to implement and the community engagement strand of the programme became the weakest element of project delivery.

Unsurprisingly, the Covid 19 pandemic had significant impact on the ability to deliver community engagement activity in the first year of the scheme, and there was continued reticence from some demographics of residents to participate at in person events through the second year of delivery.

In general, these were older people who considered themselves to be more vulnerable, but who were also less likely to choose to engage with alternative presentations, such as online talks, workshop sessions and consultations.

One major element of planned public engagement work focused on the development appraisal for Conduit Lane and the potential for closing the road.

Within the original scheme plan comprehensive community consultation was planned, as were trial road closures.

However, following a change in strategy from within Lincolnshire County Council Highways team it was apparent that it would not be possible for this work to be brought to completion, and that public consultation would be abortive and potentially raise expectations which could not be met.

In general, there was a hesitancy among residents to take part in consultation and engagement activities. While those who did take part found them to be beneficial and enjoyable, participation and attendance was lower than anticipated and desired.

Along with external political changes, there was also a significant internal restructure within SKDC. Initially the scheme was being delivered by InvestSK (then SKDC's Economic development Company). Following a formal restructure in 2020/21 the team was downsized which resulted in a loss of capacity from the project team as originally outlined in the programme design. In 2022 InvestSK was folded, and the staff bought back in house as the SKDC Economic Development team.

While it was beneficial that the High Street Heritage Action Zone Project manager remained consistent throughout the project delivery, other staff changes resulted in a reduction in overall capacity and impacted the ability to deliver the community engagement elements of the scheme.

Finally, the introduction of restrictions in delivering 'new' projects, which were not specifically included in the original scheme plan partway through the delivery of the HSAZ reduced our ability to be flexible in our approach to engagement and adapt to make use of the underspend in other areas of the community engagement strand, such as the discontinuation of works supporting the potential closure of Conduit Lane.

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**Add another?**

No

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**Description Area**

Question 3: Tell us what lessons you have learned through the delivery of your scheme  
We want to learn from the valuable insights and experiences you have gained in delivering your scheme.

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**i. Reflecting on your successes - what lessons have you learned that will inform your ongoing work and the advice you would give to others working in heritage-led high street regeneration?**

The HSHAZ programme has provided a wonderful platform for learning, and in particular will shape approaches to local regeneration projects going forward.

In particular, the successful projects highlighted the following key lessons:

- Early and consistent engagement with stakeholders is crucial

Engagement with stakeholders began before the start of the project, as part of the development phase. This allowed us to affectively shape our proposals to respond to local need and desires for the preservation and promotion of Grantham's historic environment.

As the programme worked to tight timelines for delivery of projects, early engagement was critical to give stakeholders time to develop projects and submit funding applications. This was especially important for the capital projects which had a reasonably extensive lead in time before they could begin delivery, encompassing design, planning and procurement.

Continued engagement throughout the process not only gave confidence to grant recipients, particularly applicants who had not previously received grant funding in any form ; but also ensured that any problems or risks to the project could be addressed early and quickly resolved.

Early engagement was also beneficial for the project board, as they were able to fully understand the complexity of projects and build good relationships with partners.

- The project officer should be able to offer in person assistance and remain available throughout.

For several of the participants in the scheme - particularly those applying for capital grants, this was their first experience of applying for funding, and completing an application form was somewhat daunting. By having a project officer who was knowledgeable about the scheme, and about the requirements of historic buildings, available to potential applicants they were able to receive comprehensive support and fully understand the commitment they were making.

While it is not always possible to achieve, it was useful that the same project officer was responsible for delivery throughout, meaning that participants were encouraged and supported by a consistent, trusted point of direct contact.

- A flexible approach is required.

With all projects in the historic environment a degree of flexibility and pragmatism was required from all parties to ensure that projects were delivered effectively. This was particularly crucial within capital projects as works to historic buildings almost always result in unforeseen issues which require solutions.

- Create multiple opportunities to engage at different levels

Throughout the project we were conscious of ensuring opportunities for

people to engage with the town's heritage at various levels. For some the project acted as an introduction to Grantham's historic buildings, places, and social history, and for others who were already well versed in the town it was an opportunity to share and develop their knowledge. This was really beneficial when it came to delivering public engagement and strengthening community buy into the scheme.

- Be an advocate and ambassador for your town/ community

The perception of Grantham among residents is often of a failing town with little to redeem it, however, while this is far from the truth it was often a significant barrier to engagement.

It was crucial that the project officer, and wider project team become effective ambassadors for the town, and while acknowledging that challenges remain, be consistent in highlighting opportunities and celebrating the town to encourage a greater buy in from local stakeholders. It was also important to ensure that the project officer was an advocate for community voices, particularly those who felt that their opinions were not typically included in discussions.

- Demonstrate trust and forward movement

While delivering community engagement activity such as the Community Charrette event, we received feedback that residents of Grantham had seen multiple masterplans and strategies being produced in recent years, with very little being delivered as a result.

This dissuaded some people from taking part as they did not see value for their time.

It was important to demonstrate how the information generated through the community events would be utilised, to build greater trust with the community.

It was also important to highlight that when there have been opportunities for forward movement on issues raised by the community, such as working with the Woodland Trust on options to improving street greening, that these options are being pursued.

However, it is important to be open and transparent around expectation management. By being clear about the potential timeframes involved for the development and delivery of change, and the obstacles that are faced by the community and the local authority in delivering regeneration, participants were more likely to offer up ideas and solutions with the understanding that they may be part of a long-term

**ii. Reflecting on your challenges - what lessons have you learned that will inform your ongoing work and the advice you would give to others working in heritage-led high street regeneration?**

While the capital grant schemes within the HSHAZ were generally successful, feedback received from local stakeholders indicated that smaller, independent property owners found it more difficult to access the scheme - and this was borne out by the completed applications which were received.

While some of this was due to the economic climate during the delivery period of the HSHAZ scheme, and independent property owners being less confident that they could absorb any additional expense compared to Grantham's larger estate holders; we believe that the the structure of the grant allocation process may inadvertently resulted in greater difficulties for independent property owners to access funding.

When the scheme was developed it was decided that to benefit from continuity, it would be operated in the same manner as the previous Shopfront improvement scheme which was funded through a Historic England PSiCA Scheme, which had run from 2015 -2020.

As a result, we had an open application process with no fixed deadlines, and expressions of interest were accepted and evaluated as they were submitted, until the point that the funding was fully allocated.

While our intent was to deliver a funding programme which was easy access to all, and all applicants were offered one to one support in completing expression of interest and applications; it is apparent that the result was that larger estate holders who had greater organisational capacity were able to submit applications earlier on in the process, while independent property owners tended to submit later when the majority of the funding had been allocated, or missed out entirely.

Having learnt from this experience, should we be able to run a similar project in the future it would be recommended that the grant application process be run in distinct rounds, with all the applications accepted in that round being assessed at the same point.

This would allow all applicants a similar timeframe to develop projects, but also allow for the applications to be assessed on their merits against one another, rather than simply if they did or did not meet the eligibility criteria for available funding.

Community Engagement efforts would have benefitted from a longer lead in time, not just in terms of supporting promotion, but also to allow project officers to deepen relationships with stakeholders prior to requiring their involvement in consultation.

The impact of the pandemic was deeply felt by Grantham's community stakeholders, particularly on smaller community groups and schools which saw a reduction in capacity and a significant increase in demand, limiting

their capacity or interest in engaging with the project.

While it would be hoped that should we have the opportunity to run a similar project in the future, the same pressures would not apply - nonetheless this programme would have benefitted from scheduling the large community engagement activities such as the Charrette, later in the delivery of the programme.

This would also have had the benefit of being able to demonstrate delivery of projects on the ground and build on a sense of momentum for the continued regeneration of the town.

**Description Area**

Question 4: Tell us how the 3 HSHAZ programme strands have worked together. The 3 strands are: Physical Interventions, Cultural Programme and Community Engagement.

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**Using the 5 star rating, rate how well the 3 programme strands have worked together in the delivery of your scheme (i.e. Physical Interventions, Cultural Programme and Community Engagement)**

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**Tell us more about how the strands have worked together to explain your rating.**

Throughout the programme there were opportunities for the community to become involved in the delivery of physical interventions through consultations and calls for research. This was particularly effective with the Westgate Hall project when community members were asked to share their memories and history of the building to support the options appraisal and feasibility study.

It unfortunate that one of the most closely linked projects in terms of community engagement and physical intervention - that of the Condit Lane development appraisal was not able to be delivered as envisaged due to the change in political support for the project, and this considerably lessened opportunities for the strands to work together.

As has been previously discussed in this report, the community engagement strand was a weaker aspect of delivery within the scheme, and in general participation was lower than anticipated. However, considerable learning has been taken from this, and this will continue to impact and shape consultation and engagement about regeneration within Grantham going forward.

Some aspects of the cultural programme exceeded expectations and effectively reignited conversation of what Grantham's town centre could be. The programme demonstrated both the depth of talent within the town centre, and a desire for heritage, arts and culture to be at the forefront of regeneration within the town.

While there are areas where the delivery of the cultural programme could have been more strongly and clearly linked to the delivery of physical interventions in the town centre, it served to highlight the quality and quantity of heritage which remains in the town and to begin to overcome perceptions that much of Grantham's heritage has been lost.

By being given multiple opportunities to engage with and explore Grantham's heritage, the community have underlined how important they consider the historic environment to be in the continued regeneration of the town, which will be carried forward into future projects.

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**Question 5: What opportunities and threats do you see to your ongoing work in heritage-led regeneration of your high street in the next 5-10 years? (focusing on the area as defined by your HSHAZ boundary polygon).**

There are significant opportunities for heritage-led regeneration within Grantham in the short term with the continued delivery of the Future High Street Fund programme, which has been extended into 2025.

This will include extensive public realm works in Marketplace which will create a more unified space and reestablish the marketplace as the heart of the town. This will be accompanied by a programme of events and activities which will re-enliven the historic core of the town and support the regeneration of the town's historic market.

As well as increasing the footfall and usage of Marketplace, this will allow us to continue public engagement and consultation about the regeneration of these spaces and develop projects which will highlight and preserve the historic environment for the benefit of local communities and the economy. There will be opportunity to capitalise on the reduction in traffic (especially HGV traffic) in the town centre which is expected following the completion and opening of the Grantham Southern Relief Road (anticipated in 2025). Throughout the consultation and engagement which took place as part of the HSHAZ programme, community members and stakeholders highlighted a clear desire for there to be a stronger focus on pedestrian travel and accessibility to the town centre.

While this stopped short of a clear preference for pedestrianisation of town centre areas, it will be important to maximise the potential for improvements to the pedestrian experience before the benefits of reduced traffic are lost to the expected increase in population over the next 10 - 20 years.

The delivery of shopfront regeneration in the town centre has been powerful in highlighting the benefits of a well-maintained historic environment to businesses, and there continues to be strong interest in support for improvements to historic buildings within the HSHAZ, and also along gateway routes.

SKDC will seek to maximise on this opportunity by seeking alternative funding to continue to support these impactful regeneration efforts within the town.

The programme has also highlighted a desire for increased access to arts and culture within the town centre. The cultural programme was beneficial in beginning to create a network and has also left a legacy of enhanced facilities; however, it is apparent that there is a continued interest and a wider cohort of arts and cultural practitioners who are looking to base permanent activity in the town centre.

This provides an opportunity to build on the work completed to date and support these practitioners in creating a strong arts and cultural presence, both to develop professionally, but also as key facilitators of cultural activities which will support footfall, generate civic pride, and celebrate both Grantham's heritage and its future.

Through the community engagement strand of the HSHAZ a clear desire for enhanced greening in the town centre became apparent. This has created an opportunity for SKDC to work with the Woodland Trust, who have their head office in Grantham, to develop a partnership approach to improving greening within the town centre. This has already begun with the

Woodland Trust committing £10,000 of funding to support the development of a feasibility study.

The grade II\* George shopping centre which links Westgate to the High Street is both an opportunity and threat to the regeneration of the town centre. The former coaching inn was converted into offices and a shopping centre in the 1990s, however now is almost entirely vacant and is responsible for approximately half of the town centre's retail vacancy. The building has incredible regeneration potential should the property owners be willing to engage with the local authority and invest in the future of the property, however if they are unwilling or unable to do so, and the building continue to deteriorate, it will have a disproportionately negative impact on both the economic regeneration of the town centre, and its historic environment.

The largest threat to the regeneration of the town centre - heritage led or otherwise is the continued reduction in resourcing and funding of Local Authorities and partner organisations which persists in undermining the regeneration which could be achieved. While in some areas it has been possible to leverage additional support through Levelling Up funding, South Kesteven is not a priority area for investment (despite Grantham's high levels of deprivation), and therefore has not been able to access additional funding to continue the positive work undertaken so far.

Should momentum be lost for the regeneration of the town it will prove a far greater challenge to gain community support any buy in for future efforts. Shortage of suitably trained and qualified heritage contractors is also an issue, and currently the pool of available contractors in the region is diminishing, which will continue to make the delivery of heritage led schemes challenging.

## Section B – Your feedback to Historic England

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<b>Description Area</b>	Guidance on this section: Use the 5 star rating to rate your response as follows: 1 star = Very poor, 2 stars = Poor, 3 stars = OK, 4 stars = Good, 5 stars = Excellent
<b>Description Area</b>	Question 1: How useful have Historic England's staff, templates, website resources and other sources of information been in supporting you in the following activities during delivery of your HSHAZ?
<b>Project management</b>	4
<b>Explain your answer</b>	<p>Throughout the project SKDC's HSHAZ project manager received comprehensive support and guidance from both the Historic England HSHAZ Project officers ( Ross McGivern and Rachel Foy) as well as the Principal Advisor (Clive Fletcher). Regular communication with them throughout the project enabled effective delivery and allowed the appropriate and where necessary rapid management of change.</p> <p>However, the uncertainty around governance and delay in receiving Programme guidance in the very beginning of the project did delay an effective start to programme delivery, although it is understood that this was largely due to the impact of Covid-19 on operational capacity.</p>
<b>Technical conservation advice or guidance</b>	5
<b>Explain your answer</b>	<p>The Historic England team were exceptionally knowledgeable and supportive in sharing knowledge and advising on technical conservation matters. This was of particular benefit to the scheme during periods in which the SKDC conservation officer post was vacant.</p> <p>The high-quality published guidance available from Historic England was very useful, especially to be able to share this with grant recipients as clear examples of expectations and best practice.</p>
<b>Financial and grant management</b>	4
<b>Explain your answer</b>	<p>In general the support received around financial and grant management aspects of the scheme were excellent, and the guidance and resources available made grant management straightforward.</p>
<b>Peer to peer learning opportunities and networking</b>	3

<b>Explain your answer</b>	There were great opportunities for online networking across the midlands region, which resulted in our own self directed project officer group meeting regularly, however this could have been improved by more opportunities for networking across all the HSHAZ projects nationally as well as regionally.
<b>Training videos (e.g. how to run an area scheme)</b>	3
<b>Explain your answer</b>	These were very useful as refreshers throughout the project, but the live sessions were more useful for initial learning and development.
<b>Stakeholder engagement and community outreach</b>	4
<b>Explain your answer</b>	Good training was provided as well as opportunities to learn from other schemes in the initiation phase of the programme. It would have been beneficial if there had been more opportunities to share examples of successful outreach approaches throughout.
<b>Marketing and branding advice and assets</b>	3
<b>Explain your answer</b>	Guidance was clear, and templates were easily accessible. The design service was brilliant and added much needed capacity to our inhouse designer to support the HSHAZ programme.
	However, Cultural Consortium members did not always find the cultural programme resources easy to navigate independently.
<b>Description Area</b>	Question 2: How well has the way we have worked supported you in the delivery of your scheme?
<b>Swiftness of providing information and responding to queries</b>	4
<b>Explain your answer</b>	The project officer and lead officers were very responsive to queries and forthcoming with advice, which was of considerable support to the delivery of the project. There were clear lines of communication, and regular support meetings.
	However, written information and guidance was often slow to be developed and delivered
<b>Clarity of information and messaging</b>	3

<b>Explain your answer</b>	In general information was clear and precise, however at times written guidance was slow to be delivered, and frequently changed/ updated after its release which impacted the delivery of certain areas of the programme management, in particular reporting requirements, requests for additional information, and changes in deadlines.
<b>Range of communication channels</b>	4
<b>Explain your answer</b>	<p>The range of communication options was very good, and enabled the HSHAZ project manager and other relevant officers to find information quickly and efficiently.</p> <p>However, the Knowledge Hub site was not particularly useful beyond a repository for information, however as the majority of the information available through the site was also emailed directly to project officers so in most cases it was not necessary to use the site to access the information.</p>
<b>Proactive signposting to wider resources</b>	3
<b>Explain your answer</b>	Historic England project officers and project leads were very useful in sharing and signposting wider resources when needed, and also to support professional development throughout the course of the four-year programme.
<b>Relevant events and training</b>	3
<b>Explain your answer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In the first year of delivery the training which was offered was very relevant and supported the delivery of the programme, however later on in the project some of the training offered was either less relevant, or related to elements of the project which were either well underway or which had completed, and so were less useful.</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunity for professional networking 3 (e.g. events and online communities)</b>	
<b>Explain your answer</b>	Throughout there were good opportunities for professional networking, however the most common elements of this focused on the regional areas, and although this led to the creation of strong local networks, more opportunities to network across the national scheme would have been beneficial
<b>Effective problem solving related to the delivery of your scheme</b>	5

**Explain your answer**

The support of historic England staff was essential in supporting problem solving within the scheme. They were readily available to discuss any issues and work through potential solutions to find assist in finding a satisfactory solution for all.

Within the Grantham project this was evidenced particularly strongly in relation to the Westgate Hall regeneration project, which regularly experienced difficulties in delivery which benefited from the support and experience of the Historic England team.

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**General expertise and experience within 5  
the Historic England team****Explain your answer**

The level of expertise shown by the team supporting the Grantham project was considerable and gave great confidence to both the Grantham project manager, and the project board - which included senior officers and Councillors.

The advice given by Historic England staff allowed the Project Manager to feel completely confident in communications with key stakeholders and property owners and was of great benefit to the project overall.

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**Question 3: Tell us about any other examples where you have felt supported through our work and/ or the information we have provided**

The most significant example of support from Historic England staff was in the development phase of the Westgate Hall regeneration project. Initially the support from Historic England staff was invaluable in facilitating a transfer of budget which has originally been allocated to the delivery of a small public realm project, to support a substantial grant for the capital works to the property. Additionally, the support from the Historic England team (principally Clive Fletcher and Ross McGivern), and their external verification of the proposed benefits of the project was beneficial in securing the support of the Council's cabinet to approve the grant.

Although a relatively clear path had been laid out through an options appraisal and feasibility study which was completed in 2020/21, the impact of rapidly inflating costs and of the scope of the required works was very concerning to the property owner, who had a limited and fixed budget to contribute to the project and was understandably cautious of overextending themselves financially.

However, with a future tenant in place who is willing to contribute funding to the fit out of the building for use as a restaurant, the property owner was keen not to miss the opportunity for support.

Following the tender process for the capital works, it became apparent that the scope of the scheme would have to scaled back to be able to achieve a successful result. Technical advice provided by Historic England was invaluable in supporting the decision-making process.

Following the initiation of the project, continued involvement of the Historic England team in site visits and meetings provided additional support to the Grantham HSHAZ Project Manager, and confidence to the property owner that impartial expert advice was available to them.

Similarly, involvement of the Historic England team in supporting the project board and attending meetings as advisors facilitated decision making.

**Question 4: Other than what you have shared above, what else could Historic England do to further enhance partner organisations' capacity to deliver effectively?**

Thorough the delivery of the programme guidance from Historic England about their requirements for delivery often changed, which made predicting outcomes, and reacting to risk or opportunities within the programme difficult.

This included changing stance on the inclusion of new projects to address underspend or unforeseen circumstances which could have minimised underspend and opened up new opportunities for community engagement.

While it is acknowledged that as this is first round of HSHAZ projects to be delivered by Historic England, there was inevitably learning being implemented throughout on both sides of delivery which would likely not be the case as often in any subsequent repeats of the scheme, an increased consistency in approach would be beneficial to effective delivery.

The turnover of staff at Historic England towards the end of the project reduced the level of support available. While the Historic England officers who took over the roles of departing staff were excellent, they naturally were less familiar with the projects and the complicating factors inhibiting delivery, so support was less effective.

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### Important information before you submit form

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<b>Description Area</b>	By submitting this report, I confirm the information provided has been verified and approved by this scheme's Senior Responsible Officer or equivalent person within this scheme's governance arrangements.?
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<b>Name (of person submitting this report form)</b>	Claire Saunders
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<b>Name of Senior Responsible Officer or equivalent who has verified and approved this report for submission</b>	Nick Hibberd, Head of Economic Development and Inward Investment
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<b>Signature (of person submitting this report form)</b>
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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Claire Saunders'.

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## **HSM\_53: GRANTHAM 'ARTS AND EXPLORATION': HIGH STREET HERITAGE ACTION ZONE CULTURAL PROGRAMME NARRATIVE EVALUATION REPORT**

### **Introduction**

The High Street Heritage Action Zone cultural programme provided a fantastic opportunity to bring together a number of creatives and cultural organisations within Grantham and bring art and culture to the town centre, to celebrate the town's heritage and explore hopes for the future.

Grantham benefits from a vibrant arts community, encompassing many disciplines, and many of our local artists, creatives, and cultural organisations expressed an interest informing the Cultural Consortium during the initial bidding process for the High Street Heritage Action Zone programme in 2019.

These groups formed the basis of the Grantham Cultural Consortium going forward and were responsible for the development and implementation of the cultural programme. The Grantham Cultural Consortium was made up of:

- **Grantham Dramatic Society**
- **Grantham Community Heritage Association (Grantham Museum)**
- **Grantham Arts**
- **Chantry Dance Company**
- **St Wulfram's Church**
- **National Trust**

The 'Grantham: Arts and Exploration' programme was designed to engage residents and visitors to the town centre with arts and heritage in a new way, and to provide opportunities for people to develop skills, and enjoy creative activity both for the duration of the scheme and beyond.

The programme set out six aims, and through this evaluation document the extent to which they were successful will be explored and determined.

The aims and intended outcomes outlined during programme development were as follows:

- **Aim 1: Explore, highlight and celebrate the heritage of Grantham, in support of the main HSHAZ programme**

Intended outcome: The Grantham community will have a greater understanding and appreciation of the town's heritage, and of the economic and social benefits of retaining, restoring, and preserving heritage assets.

- **Aim 2: Deliver an exciting programme of cultural activity within the Heritage Action Zone.**

Intended outcome: Between January 2021 and December 2023 members of the Cultural Consortium will curate and deliver an integrated programme of varied cultural activity, inspired by the built and social heritage of Grantham. The programme will bring vibrancy to the town centre and create memorable experiences.

- **Aim 3: Engage all those who live, visit and work in Grantham thorough opportunities to participate.**

Intended outcome: The Grantham community will have opportunity to participate in the creation and delivery of the cultural programme and will have multiple opportunities to take part. A range of activities will be developed to engage people with different interests and levels of experience.

- **Aim 4: Create dedicated, accessible spaces for cultural activity**

Intended outcome: Dedicated spaces for creative activity in the town centre will be created, allowing groups and individuals within and beyond the cultural consortium access to equipment, rehearsal and performance space etc. These spaces will support the delivery of activity within the programme and provide continuing legacy beyond 2024, supporting the diversification of the town centre.

- **Aim 5: Increase the capacity and sustainability of cultural organisations and community groups**

Intended outcome: Members of the cultural consortium, along with other cultural organisations in the community will benefit from increased capacity through the creation of a cultural network. New delivery and commercial models will have been tested to support long term sustainability. The programme will also provide opportunity for professionals in the cultural and creative industries to benefit from paid commissions.

- **Aim 6: Increase the diversity of volunteers, participants and audiences.**

Intended outcome: A wide and diverse audience will be supported through the range and variation of activity available. Performances and activity will be provided free of charge, reducing barriers to participation. The delivery of cultural activity in town centre spaces will encourage participation from individuals and groups who may not usually engage in creative activity in more traditional settings such as theatres and museums. Opportunities for individuals to translate new or existing interests into volunteering or wider participation will be highlighted throughout, supporting an increase in capacity.

## **Project Overviews**

The programme secured funding for nine projects which were developed and delivered by the members of the consortium. Each organisation (except for the National Trust, who remained a member of the Consortium in an advisory capacity) submitted project proposals as part of the project development process, which would align with one or more of the overarching aims. The

proposals were then assessed by the consortium using a scoring matrix and the highest scoring proposals were selected and put forward as part of the funding bid in December 2020.

Each of the proposals which secured funding through the process was then delivered directly by the relevant group or groups within the consortium.

- **Festival of Angels (St Wulfram's Church)**

The Festival of Angels was the first of the Grantham Cultural projects to be delivered. Local artists worked with the community to create large, dramatic angel sculptures which were displayed in St Wulfram's church.

The project was a reflection of the town through Covid 19, and peoples hopes and aspirations for the future.

It opened in November 2021 and ran through to February.

- **Westgate Hub (Grantham Dramatic Society)**

In 2019 Grantham Dramatic Society (GDS) took a lease on an extensive, long term vacant property to the rear of a café in Grantham town centre (84 Westgate), with the aim of bringing back into use as a community performing arts hub and exhibition space.

Through the cultural programme, GDS were able to complete works to install a kitchen, renovate toilets including the addition of an accessible toilet. In addition, the project supported the digitisation of the GDS archive which will be made available to the public.

- **Heritage Walks (Grantham Dramatic Society)**

Heritage Walks was a programme of guided heritage walks with volunteers portraying historical figures from Grantham's past to explore the town's history.

- **Heritage Touring (Grantham Dramatic Society)**

The heritage touring project was originally included within the project bid. The ambition was for the society to tour a performance linked to Grantham's heritage in local venues other than traditional theatre spaces. The ambition was to be able to connect with audiences who would not normally attend theatre performances.

Unfortunately, due to a significant lack of volunteers following the Covid pandemic, GDS were not able to deliver this element of the project work, and the project was removed from the programme.

- **Community Print (Grantham Arts)**

The Community Print project, delivered by Grantham Arts gave local residents the opportunity to develop new skills and explore Grantham's built heritage through the medium of Lino Cut prints. Participants took part in four sessions, learning lino cut and printing techniques which culminated in them creating artworks featuring Grantham's historic and buildings and landmarks.

The process was adapted to deliver workshops which were accessible to adults with learning disabilities.

The resulting artworks were exhibited at Grantham Museum.

- **Community Ceramics (Grantham Arts)**

Within the original funding bid, the community ceramics project, delivered by Grantham Arts was due to create 12 large vessels which would be decorated by local community groups to depict

Grantham's heritage and their hopes for the town's future.

However, the project suffered from a number of delays, which will be discussed later in this report, and as a result was reshaped to allow works to complete in a shorter timeframe.

Ultimately the group delivered the 'My Grantham Family' project, which encouraged members of the public to create ceramic representations of their families, which were displayed in shop windows within the HSAZ.

Ultimately, this allowed for a greater level of engagement with people who would not ordinarily take part in cultural activities, and attract a wider demographic generally, as people were able to take part in drop-in sessions, rather than being required to commit to multiple sessions over several weeks to create a finished piece.

- **Community Exhibition Program (Grantham Community Heritage Association)**

The original programme plan was for the cultural programme to fund a programme of exhibitions which would be co-curated by the Grantham Community. However, the museum team suffered from a significant loss of capacity following the pandemic as volunteers did not return to the museum following its reopening. Despite best efforts of the museum team, they have not been able as yet to rebuild the number of volunteers and therefore did not have the capacity to deliver the exhibition programme.

With the agreement of Historic England, the project was reconfigured to focus on less people intensive activities – the creation of a Grantham Timeline, which will be on permanent display in the museum, and the creation of a community cabinet, where local individuals, groups and societies will be welcome to create their own exhibitions about elements of Grantham's history which are important to them.

These elements were delivered late in the programme, and have yet to reach their full impact, however as permanent elements of the museum's offer, they will serve as a legacy to the project.

- **Ghost Dances (Chantry Dance)**

Chantry dance is a multi-award-winning dance company based in Grantham. As part of the cultural programme, they were inspired by the music of Grantham born composer Nicholas Maw, and in particular the Ghost Dances suite.

Through the project they created and performed a new piece based on the themes of dreams and memory.

They also delivered workshops exploring the same themes through movement and dance.

- **Capacity Building (All)**

The final element included within the Cultural Programme budget was an annual budget which the consortium members could self-direct to support their development and build organisational resilience, for example, to facilitate training of fund membership to professional organisations.

Unfortunately, this was the area of the project which was least successful. Despite regular prompting and encouragement to take up this opportunity, only one of the groups – Chantry Dance – utilised the training budget. The failure of this element of the project resulted in an underspend across the scheme.

## Programme achievements

The Grantham Arts and Exploration Programme delivered some significant achievements, and a programme of activities which encouraged residents and visitors to learn about the town's heritage and look at the place in a new light.

The **Festival of Angels** at St Wulfram's church was the first event delivered through the programme. Three local professional artists were commissioned to create 10 angel sculptures which were then exhibited within the church. 180 volunteers supported their creation over 11 community workshops. Community groups which took part included Positive Futures, a group which supports children from deprived communities in Grantham; South Lincolnshire Blind Society, and the Daybreak Centre, which supports young adults with disabilities. Nine students from Grantham College chose to work on the project as part of their work experience requirements.

For many of the participants, the project was a period of reflection and coming together marking a new beginning following the impacts of the Covid 19 Pandemic. Participants were given the opportunity to record and share their hopes and wishes for the future, which were displayed during the festival.

100 people attended the launch event for the festival, and although the church was not able to record exact visitor numbers over the period that the sculptures were displayed (as the church is open access) St Wulfram's Christmas Tree Festival and winter ice rink took place during the period the angels were displayed, which was visited by over 2000 people.

Visitors feedback was exceptionally positive. While St Wulfram's church has a reputation for hosting art exhibitions, many of these are professional pieces, such as Luke Jerram's 'Museum of the Moon', large scale community projects are much less likely to take place – largely due to the cost implications.

The project was very successful in encouraging residents who might not ordinarily have visited St Wulfram's, and even those who were regular visitors to experience the place in a new way.

Feedback received from visitors included:

- "The angels are breath-taking."
- "The angels are amazing!"
- "The angels are so very moving. It provoked a very emotional response. Well done to those who made this beautiful festival of Angels happen."
- "Festival a delight – thank you."

There was mixed success for the projects led by Grantham Dramatic Society were, overall, they did achieve many of the aims of the project as a whole, but there are areas where they were not able to achieve the full scope of their ambitions for the project.

Across both the **Westgate Hub and Heritage Walks projects**, the Society recorded over 800 volunteer hours. The Westgate Hub project was particularly successful and supported the creation of a permanent base for the GDS in the town centre, as well as creating accessible facilities which will be made available to other groups and organisations.

The project supported the installation of level flooring, refurbished toilets, including the addition of

an accessible toilet and the installation of a kitchen. This has allowed the GDS hub, at the rear of 84 Westgate to host social events and coffee mornings both for members of the society and the wider community.

The creation of community spaces for art and culture within the town centre was a key aim on the project overall, and the creation of the Westgate Hub.

The Heritage Walk programme delivered seven walks which were attended by 67 people. Another 50 people were engaged in conversations about the town's heritage but were not formally participating in the tour themselves.

Feedback received was very positive and included:

- I had no idea there were so many historical figures associated with Grantham.”
- “Found the walk really fascinating.”
- “Learned so much on the walk.”
- “The walk was amazing, thank you. I loved seeing you all dressed up.”

This feedback highlights what is often found in Grantham. Members of the public -especially long-term residents - are quick to write the town off as being uninteresting and unimportant, but when provided with accessible and fun opportunities to learn about the town's heritage, begin to see it in a new light.

The heritage walk programme had a considerable underspend as GDS were not able to deliver all of the walk elements as originally planned. As a result the total grant expenditure on this element of the project was only £233. The remainder of the budget for this project – totalling £1603 was transferred to the delivery of the Westgate Hub project to ensure that it remained deliverable following the impact of inflation on project costs.

**Ghost Dances** provided opportunity to explore the works of Nicholas Maw, a Grantham born composer who, despite being considered among the country's pre-eminent post – war composers, is not well known in his hometown of Grantham.

Maw was born on Finkin Street, which is within the Grantham HSHAZ. Chantry Dance chose to utilise his Ghost Dances suite which deals with the theme of dreams and memories.

Chantry Dance choreographed a new piece based on his music, which was performed at the Guildhall Arts Centre on the 25 -26<sup>th</sup> April 2023.

As with all of the activities delivered through the cultural programme, performances were free, however there was disappointingly low attendance - in total 139 people saw the performances.

It is recognised that contemporary music, such as that composed by Maw, and contemporary dance, can be challenging to audiences, and is not something which is regularly performed in the town centre, as it is often not commercially viable to do so.

The Cultural programme provide the opportunity to stage a performance that otherwise would not have taken place and introduce residents of the town to new cultural experiences on the High Street.

By bringing a performance like this to the town centre gave people an opportunity to experience it 'risk free' as audience members did not have the barrier of cost to attend – or the risk of expending their entertainment budget on something they might not enjoy.

Those who did attend gave very positive feedback - both of the performance itself, but also expressed surprise at discovering the composer and his links to Grantham.

Alongside the performances, Chantry Dance ran three community workshops, aimed at those with no previous dance experience, to explore memory, music and movement. Two workshops were open to the general public, while the third was delivered for elderly residents at Maple Leaf Care Home in Grantham. These workshops engaged an additional 30 participants.

People attending the workshops expressed their delight at the opportunity to do something different in the town centre, and one participant even hugged the workshop facilitators as they had found the experience liberating. Once again, by removing the cost barrier to participate gave the opportunity to take part to people who would not otherwise have done so.

Grantham Arts delivered two projects within the programme: **Community Print and Community Ceramics**.

Community Print encouraged participants to explore the architecture and landmarks of Grantham and express them through lino cut art.

They ran four workshops, each made up of four once weekly sessions where participants were taught techniques of lino cutting and printing and explored the town's built heritage, eventually producing their own artworks featuring Grantham's buildings which were exhibited in Grantham Museum.

In addition, a further single day session was run which was adapted to be suitable for adults with learning disabilities to take part.

In total 30 people took part in the workshops. The exhibition of works at the Grantham Museum opened in early March 2024, and will continue to run beyond the end of the HSHAZ scheme, to take advantage of the Easter Holiday which begins immediately after the end of the programme.

The Community Ceramics project faced significant challenges (discussed in full later in this report), which resulted in the original planned project not being deliverable. Initially Grantham Arts had planned to create 12 large vessels which would be decorated by community groups.

However, as it became apparent that it would not be possible to deliver this project as originally planned, a simplified project – 'My Grantham Family' was developed.

This project encouraged residents to produce models of their families, which were later displayed in shop windows around the town.

Ultimately the smaller scale of the pieces produced through this project led to a greater level of engagement. Participants were able to attend drop-in sessions, rather than having to commit to multiple sessions, or lengthy workshops. As the items were more portable, it was possible for sessions to be run in schools, and in the George Shopping Centre during Christmas activities.

This approach in particular, allowed people who chanced upon the activities while visiting the town for other reasons to take part - and they were then encouraged back to find their pieces on display.

173 people took part over six sessions, the majority of whom were children. Out of all the activities held, this was by far the most accessible for children, and their parents were also encouraged to take part.

As with the print exhibition, the models will remain on display over the Easter school holiday period to encourage visits to the town centre.

Grantham Community Heritage Association (Grantham Museum) faced the greatest challenges when it came to delivering their programme of activity. Ultimately, they were not able to deliver the programme of exhibitions which had formed the original proposal, and as a result the level of

community engagement with their programme was limited.

With the support and agreement of the Historic England team, the project was scaled back to something which was more achievable.

The Museum team worked with five volunteers over 90 hours (total) to research and produce a timeline of Grantham's history, which will be permanently displayed in the museum.

In addition, they were able to purchase and install a new display unit to be used as a community cabinet – this will also become a permanent feature of the museum, and community groups, businesses or individuals will be able to use this space to produce small exhibitions focused on the elements of Grantham's history which are important to them.

## **Challenges and Lessons Learned**

There were a number of challenges which affected the Consortium as a whole, along with issues which affected individual projects. All of the challenges were opportunities for learning for the consortium and its individual members and overcoming them has supported not only the delivery of this programme, but shaping the future direction and ambition of the project's legacy.

For the majority of the Cultural Consortium members, this was the first time that they had taken part in the development of an externally funded project. It proved a learning experience for all of the members.

Ensuring that the projects put forward as part of the bid would meet the requirements of the HSHAZ cultural programme was a challenge but by developing an initial internal bid process, during which each of the groups submitted their projects, and an internal scoring process, during which all of the Consortium Members had the opportunity to score all of the proposals utilising a scoring matrix, gave the groups some insight into how funding bids need to be developed and presented.

This increased the confidence of those groups in seeking other external funding.

A major challenge which affected all of the projects delivered through the programme was volunteer capacity, particularly following Covid-19.

All of the volunteers run or supported consortium members found that their volunteer numbers had significantly reduced, and despite efforts to promote opportunities and recruit new volunteers, numbers have still not returned to pre-pandemic levels.

This was a particular issue for Grantham Dramatic Society, who found that they were unable to deliver the community touring element of the scheme because of lack of volunteers to do so. It also limited the number of heritage walks that they were able to deliver over timeframe of the programme.

However, by taking part in the scheme they have been able to determine methods of delivery with fewer people, and at the same time raised their profile, and will potentially interest people in taking part as costumed guides for the heritage walks, who might not have been interested in joining the society's more typical programme of Amateur Dramatic productions.

Likewise, loss of volunteers was a significant problem for the Grantham Community Heritage Association (GCHA) in the delivery of their original programme. In this instance the issue was

exacerbated as the Museum's part time manager left in 2020 and was not replaced. Throughout the programme the reduced GCHA board and volunteers struggled to develop and deliver an exhibition programme.

A proposed project between the National Trust and the Museum which would have explored the impact of the use of nearby Belton House during the first world war as a base for the Machine Gun Corps, and specifically the impact the sudden appearance of 20,000 soldiers had on the town centre, was approved by Historic England, but was not able to proceed due to insufficient volunteer capacity.

SKDC underwent several staff restructures in 2020, which resulted in a reduction in the number of staff available to support the delivery of the project, particularly within the Council's Arts team. These restructures resulted in the HSHAZ project officer becoming the only member of staff supporting the cultural consortium programme.

This exacerbated the challenges faced with volunteers, as it was not possible to maintain the level of support originally indicated during the project development and bid process and put more emphasis on the Consortium members to deliver all aspects of the project.

Had the Council's arts team been in a position to be more involved, or even to lead some aspects of the project delivery, it likely would have had a more successful outcome.

This has highlighted the need for a different approach to be taken, and should opportunity be created to carry out a similar project in the future, it would benefit from budget being identified to contract a dedicated programme facilitator to ensure that delivery partners were adequately supported throughout.

Similarly, increased costs driven by inflation and high energy costs proved a challenge across the board for the delivery of projects.

Ghost Dances was originally envisaged to be performed outside of traditional theatre spaces, to encourage engagement from a wider audience, including those who may have been put off by a dance performance at a theatre.

Unfortunately, as the project was scheduled for delivery in 2023, the costs associated with staging, lights, power, PA systems etc, had increased to the extent that made an outdoor performance - or a performance in an alternative venue unfeasible. Therefore, Chantry Dance ultimately delivered their performances within Grantham Arts Centre.

While this resulted in a successful delivery of the Ghost Dances project, it limited the potential of the project to engage with people who would not choose to visit a theatre.

Similarly, higher than anticipated costs also impacted the Festival of Angels project, albeit in a lesser way. The project was able to deliver all of its original objectives but did have to shorten its proposed run, due to the cost of the rigging for the angel sculptures. The decision to hold the festival over the same period as the Christmas Tree festival however, ensured high numbers of visitors got to experience both events and engage with St Wulfram's as a community venue, and as a historic site.

The structure of the programme, which each Cultural Consortium member group taking responsibility for one project or group of projects proved challenging. While each group delivered their own projects, there was a tendency for groups to become less engaged with the programme overall when their project was completed.

This made it difficult to rapidly address any areas of underspend, or to effectively explore alternative delivery methods.

Ultimately, this was a flaw in how the HSHAZ Project Manager established the funding structure for the consortium members. Should a similar project be repeated in the future, a more centralised approach should be taken, with the group taking responsibility for the delivery of all of the projects throughout the programme. More consideration should have been given to the role of the Cultural Consortium as a body to commission works, rather than deliver all of the projects directly.

While we all wished to see a quality outcome in the work that was created, the priority for the project was engagement. Working directly with artists as the Consortium Members did sometimes create a conflict between a desire for high quality artistic output vs this priority for engagement, and it was necessary at times to encourage the artists to step away from their preconceived notion of specific outputs and be guided by the wider community.

Ultimately, this was overcome as the first projects delivered with the community took place and demonstrated the opportunities for both high quality output.

As has previously been mentioned, the most significant area of failure within the programme was within the internal capacity building project.

Within this element of the programme, an annual budget was ringfenced for each of the groups to support each member group in accessing training or professional memberships which would assist in their development.

Despite regular prompting for the Consortium members to make use of this budget, only one of the member groups – Chantry Dance – accessed funding for training.

This resulted in the largest underspend across the project, and it is likely had a programme of training been developed and implemented centrally, it would not only have benefited the consortium members, but could also have been offered to a wider group of participants, strengthening the cultural sector within Grantham as a whole.

At times delays in communication with the Historic England team was barrier to moving projects forward. While the team was generally very responsive, and offered clear guidance and advice, on occasion project change requests took several months to determine and as a result there was a delayed start to projects which impacted the overall timetable of delivery and impacted the ability to be flexible around reallocating underspend.

Grantham Arts faced a specific challenge in the delivery of their two projects, Community Print and Community Ceramics. Initially the intent was to establish an Arts Hub at Grantham House, a National Trust property which is currently leased to St Wulfram's church.

Shortly after the initiation of the project, it became apparent that this would no longer be possible – largely due to the increase in costs needed to bring the space into use, which would have meant that St Wulfram's it was no longer feasible for them to offer the space rent free to Grantham Arts.

This delay had a significant impact on the delivery of the programme and potentially on its planned legacy outputs to create a permanent arts hub.

In order to support the project aims, and the legacy of the programme, it was important that the hub was located as close to the high street as possible, and this gave limited options which were

suitable, without Grantham Arts having to absorb the cost of a lease or operators licence on a vacant unit for the full duration of the project.

Working together with other Consortium Members we were able to resolve the venue problem, and the Grantham Arts projects, which included the installation of a Kiln and other equipment, were able to go ahead utilizing under used space within Grantham Museum.

In many ways this has proved preferable, as the museum site is more central to the high street and closer to parking and public transport links. Grantham Arts have been able to benefit from purpose-built exhibition space within the museum, and the museum has, and will continue to benefit from increased footfall generated by project participants.

## **Legacy**

Creating a long-term legacy which would support ongoing access to creative an cultural activity within Grantham town centre was a key aim for the programme, as well as for the HSHAZ cultural programme as a whole.

Prior to the cultural programme, Grantham's rich heritage and arts sector was often perceived as being hidden and inaccessible, with low levels of community engagement.

There was a clear desire which had been expressed during various consultation processes for dedicated hubs on the town centre, which could both facilitate the development of arts businesses, and also increase community access to arts facilities.

Through the Cultural Programme, Consortium Members were able to create two long term arts hubs in the town centre.

Grantham Dramatic Society's Westgate Hub, created at 84 Westgate, will become a key space for both the Society itself and other performing arts and community organisations.

The Cultural Consortium funding has supported the Society in making the space accessible for all, including providing accessible toilets within the building.

To date, this has supported increased community activity from the site, including workshops and coffee mornings.

Going forward the venue will provide rehearsal and performance space – not only for GDS themselves, but also for other community groups in and around Grantham town centre.

Grantham Arts' hub, now based within the Grantham Museum, will provide facilities for artists. Although the facilities supported by the grant funding were determined by the Cultural Consortium members, they do tie in with desires which were raised by the wider community through previous consultations into arts provision in Grantham.

Alongside delivering the HSHAZ cultural programme, Grantham Arts have committed to delivering regular exhibitions which will take place within the museum going forward.

Through the programme the Grantham Arts team were able to test their business model and have established as a CIC to provide sustainable provision for the delivery of arts activity on the High Street. They have delivered their first commercial venture – a series of 'pottery and prosecco' evenings.

Through their engagement in the programme, and previous community arts activities Grantham Arts have developed experience in community engagement through the arts, and they will continue to develop and facilitate community arts activities.

Aligned to this increased community activity based at the museum, the Grantham Community Heritage Association's ongoing community cabinet project, will allow residents and community organisations to develop and deliver small exhibitions to share the heritage which is important to them.

As previously discussed within this report, many of the Cultural Consortium Members had no previous experience of applying for external funding, through the development, delivery, and evaluation process of the HSHAZ cultural programme, they have been guided through the process, and gained skills which will support them going forward.

Many of the consortium groups were also able to resource themselves through the programme in a way which will allow them to continue to deliver work inspired by the town's heritage beyond the scope of the project. For example, Grantham Dramatic Society have committed to continuing to develop and deliver heritage walks in the town building on the skills and facilities developed during the Cultural Programme.

With support from the HSHAZ Project Manager, the Community Heritage Association was successful in securing £18,600 from the Arts Fund Reimagined programme to support capacity building and museum development. They are currently beginning to deliver that programme of works which will bolster their activity – and the legacy of the HSHAZ cultural projects further.

Through the consortium, the groups had opportunity to network more widely among the cultural and arts providers in and around the town centre. Through building better and lasting links between the consortium members, local businesses, and community organisations has supported a strengthening of the arts and cultural sector within Grantham, which will continue to deliver for residents and visitors alike and bring vibrancy and energy for our town centre in the years to come.

## **Conclusion**

Grantham 'Arts and Exploration' was successful in delivering outcomes across all of the aims set by the project, however the impact of the programme, and level of engagement was less than anticipated during the programme design phase.

Feedback from participants has demonstrated that the programme has encouraged them to explore Grantham's heritage, and that they have discovered things they did not previously know about the town which has improved their perception of the town.

The programme has clearly demonstrated a desire for arts and cultural activity to be a feature of the high street and provided the consortium members with opportunities to test new development and delivery pathways, establishing sustainable models which will continue beyond the closure of the programme.

While the capacity building project within the programme failed to deliver the identified outcomes, the project overall did support the development of a more robust cultural sector, and bolster the

organisational resilience of the consortium members.

Through the development of two hubs for ongoing community activity – one for performing arts through the Grantham Dramatic Society hub at 84 Westgate, and one through Grantham Art's permanent residency at Grantham Museum will continue this ongoing legacy, as well as support continued development of arts and cultural activities, and support the resilience of all three organisations.

Throughout the programme of activities Consortium members have made concerted efforts to engage with a wide demographic of users. They were proactive in ensuring that the activities they delivered were accessible, and able to make suitable adjustments where necessary to deliver activities to groups who may otherwise not have been able to take part fully.

The projects encouraged residents and visitors to enter heritage spaces that they may not otherwise have explored, and crucially feel welcomed and engaged in those spaces. Through activities like the Festival of Angels, and the Grantham Arts project people were able to explore spaces which they had previously identified as being for 'others', like St Wulfram's church.

Ghost Dances introduced unknown music and contemporary dance to new audiences, however it is recognised that had Chantry Dance been able to utilise the alternative spaces originally envisioned for the project, rather than performing in a traditional theatre space, their would have been higher levels of engagement.

As this was the first time that many of the organisations taking part as Consortium members has taken part in a project like this, there was inevitably a learning curve to the delivery of the works for all involved.

Most notably it has been identified that a greater degree of centralised facilitation throughout would have resulted in a more successful scheme. Should the opportunity arise to deliver a similar programme again, having reflected on lessons learned through the HSHAZ Cultural programme, we would encourage a different structure to the consortium. Rather than opting for each of the groups to be responsible for their own area of delivery, we would aim for a more collaborative approach, ideally also identifying budget to employ a cultural programme facilitator to oversee the delivery of all of the projects and increase the capacity of those organisations which struggled to deliver.

However, despite these challenges Grantham Arts and Exploration programme successfully delivered a four-year programme of arts and cultural activity which brought people together in celebration of Grantham's built and social heritage and engendered civic pride, which will leave a lasting legacy of sustainable and community driven arts and creative activity within the town centre.

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SOUTH  
KESTEVEN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL



## Culture & Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 18 June 2024

Report of Cllr Philip Knowles, Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Licensing

# Corporate Plan 2020-23 Key Performance Indicators End-of-Plan and 2023/24 End-Year (Q4) Report

### Report Author

Charles James, Policy Officer

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### Purpose of Report

This report outlines South Kesteven District Council's performance against the Corporate Plan 2020-23 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) from January-March 2024, and presents a summary of overall performance over the lifecycle of the Corporate Plan 2020-23.

### Recommendations

#### That the Committee:

1. **Review and scrutinise the performance against the Corporate Plan Key Performance Indicators in relation to the delivery of the Corporate Plan 2020-23 priorities and outcomes.**
2. **Use this report to inform and support the ongoing work programme of the Committee.**

Decision Information	
Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Connecting Communities, Enabling Economic Opportunity
Which wards are impacted?	All

## 1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

### ***Finance and Procurement***

- 1.1 The financial considerations where appropriate are referenced throughout this report.

Completed by: Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer

### ***Legal and Governance***

- 1.2 Regular reporting on agreed actions and measures is to be welcomed from a governance point of view, as it provides a transparent mechanism for reporting on performance. The report highlights that a new KPI suite has been adopted and this will be reflected in future reports.

Completed by: Mandy Braithwaite, Legal Executive

## 2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 The South Kesteven Corporate Plan 2020-2023 was approved by Council on the 1st of October 2020. It was agreed by Council that actions, key performance indicators (KPIs) and targets would be developed by the relevant overview and scrutiny committee, which would retain oversight of the performance management arrangements at a strategic level. These actions and indicators were then presented to the Culture & Visitor Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee (the predecessor to this Committee) and agreed on the 17 November 2020.

- 2.2 Regular mid-year (Q2) and end-of-year (Q4) KPI reports were presented to the responsible Committee for scrutiny over the previous four years.
- 2.3 The last prior was the Mid-Year report for 2023/24, which was presented to the Committee on 30 November 2023 and outlined the performance against the Corporate Plan 2020-23 for Quarter 2 2023/24.
- 2.4 2023/24 was the final year of reporting on the Corporate Plan 2020-23 KPI suite. The Corporate Plan 2024-27 was adopted by Council in January 2024.
- 2.5 This report is the last on the Corporate Plan 2020-23, providing an update on performance for the 2023/24 financial year, and a summary overview of the Council's performance over the period 2020/21 to 2023/24.

#### **Corporate Plan 2020-23 End-of-Plan Action Review**

- 2.6 The Corporate Plan 2020-23 listed seven actions across the priorities Healthy & Strong Communities, and Growth & Our Economy, which fell within the remit of this Committee. These actions set the Council's agenda for the life of that Plan.
- 2.7 The first round of performance reporting in 2020/21 introduced a series of criteria for what successful delivery would look like. This criterion has been used as the yardstick to judge the Council's overall performance against the stated actions.
- 2.8 It should be recognised that the Council is not a static organisation. Over the course of the Plan's lifecycle there were significant changes to the senior political and officer leadership. There also were challenging external conditions, from the pandemic – the longer-term impacts and legacy of which were not clear at the start of the Plan, the onset of the Ukraine conflict in February 2022 and cost of living crisis. Each development will have influenced the Council's priorities and resource allocations.
- 2.9 Furthermore, the stated actions had varying levels of Council control. Some were wholly within the Council's control e.g. delivery of the Arts Service Review, development & adoption of the Cultural Strategy and the resultant implementation of action plans. Others were substantially outside the Council's control e.g. an action with the success criteria of a 'increased visitor spend in the district'.
- 2.10 For these reasons, the Council's stated success conditions with the context of degree of control, rather than the individual metrics which evolved over the reporting cycle, are preferred as the simplest and most direct form of accountability.
- 2.11 Of the seven stated actions:
  - Five were wholly within the Council's control and successfully achieved.
  - One was substantially outside the Council's control and was partially achieved.
  - One was substantially outside the Council's control and was not achieved.

2.12 A summary is set in Table 1 below:

<b>Table 1: Summary Review of Corporate Plan 2020-23 Culture &amp; Leisure Actions</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Success Criteria</b>	<b>SKDC Control</b>	<b>End of Plan Status</b>
Celebrate and enhance the rich history of the district.	Increased level of understanding of the historical figures and events that have shaped the South Kesteven of today.	Within SKDC control	Achieved
Adopt a new cultural strategy covering the local arts, events and festivals programme.	Adoption of a new culture strategy that enhances quality of life, health and wellbeing and brings communities together	Within SKDC control	Achieved
Develop and adopt a sport and physical activity strategy.	Adopting and achieving the outcomes of a Sports and Physical Activity Strategy for the district	Within SKDC control	Achieved
Improve and invest in local arts and cultural venues.	Fit for purpose facilities at Stamford Arts Centre, Grantham Guildhall and Bourne Exchange as well as other Council-supported arts and cultural assets across the district	Within SKDC control	Achieved
Review Arts services within the district with ambition to provide improved, efficient and accessible arts within the district.	A sustainably provisioned arts service for residents and visitors to the district.	Within SKDC control	Achieved
Work with partners and attractions, to promote visitor economy and increase visitor spend in the District, including the adoption of a Tourism Strategic Framework.	Increase in the amount of visitor spend in the district. Development and adoption of a strategic document that positions SKDC at the centre of its Visitor Economy.	Substantially outside	Partially Achieved (visitor spend is at record levels (2022), but the Tourism Strategic Framework has not been delivered)
Work closely with markets across South Kesteven and seek to maintain their viability.	Vibrant and financially viable markets that contribute to the footfall and economic activity of the town	Substantially outside	Unachieved

2.13 Appendix A presents a review of the Council's performance against the actions within the remit of this Committee for the Corporate Plan 2020-23.

#### **End-of-Year 2023/24 Update**

2.14 Appendix B presents the overall performance against the five actions being presented for Q4 2023/24, as well as specific performance against the sub

measures contained within those. Specific commentary is provided for each action, which is summarised as follows:

- Four of the actions are rated Green. These are actions which are on, or above target as planned.
- One of the actions is rated Amber. This is an action which is currently below the planned target.
- Zero actions are rated Red. This is an action, which is currently significantly below the planned target.
- Two actions of the original seven are no longer reported.

### **Future Reporting**

- 2.15 To accompany the Corporate Plan 2024-27, a new suite of KPIs was developed to reflect the priorities, ambitions, and actions of the new Plan. All the new measures are wholly within the Council's control.
- 2.16 The new KPI suite with proposed targets for 2024-27 was presented to, considered, and approved by the Committee on 26 March 2024.
- 2.17 The new KPI suite is included for the Committee's reference, incorporating the alterations and recommendations stipulated by the Committee in the March session.
- 2.18 The Committee will receive the first report on the new KPIs (mid-year 2024/25) in Quarter 3 2024/25.

### **3. Key Considerations**

- 3.1 This is the last presentation of the KPIs for the Corporate Plan 2020-23. A general overview of the Council's performance displays that SKDC achieved five of the seven stated actions within the remit of this Committee for the Corporate Plan 2020-23. Two of these actions however were substantially outside the Council's control. Of the five actions directly within the Council's control: SKDC achieved all five.
- 3.2 This is also a presentation of the end year (Q4) data for 2023/24.
- 3.3 There is commentary for each of the KPIs with an appropriate update from each area.
- 3.4 The Corporate Plan 2024-27 was adopted in January 2024. A new KPI suite to reflect the new Corporate Plan was approved by Committee in March 2024. The first report using the new KPIs will be presented in Quarter 3 2024/25.

### **4. Reasons for the Recommendations**

- 4.1 This is a regular report where Members are invited to scrutinise and comment on performance.

## **5. Appendices**

- 5.1 Appendix A – Corporate Plan 2020-23: Culture & Leisure OSC – End of Plan Action Review
- 5.2 Appendix B - KPI Report: Culture & Leisure OSC (Q4) 2023/24
- 5.3 Appendix C - Approved KPI Suite 2024-27

Corporate Plan 2020-23: Culture & Leisure OSC – End of Plan Action Review								
Corporate Plan 2020-2023 Priority	Overview & Scrutiny Committee	Corporate Plan 2020-2023 Action	Corporate Plan 2020-2023 Success Criteria	KPI	Target	SKDC Control	End of Plan Status	Summary Commentary
Healthy & Strong Communities	Culture & Leisure	Celebrate and enhance the rich history of the district.	Increased level of understanding of the historical figures and events that have shaped the South Kesteven of today.	Number of residents engaged through SKDC promoted cultural activities	Minimum of six events per year, engaging a total of 50,000 people	Within SKDC control	Achieved	The heritage of the district is a key focus of the DiscoverSK website. In March 2023, the Council released a short film celebrating ten inspirational women from South Kesteven.
Healthy & Strong Communities	Culture & Leisure	Adopt a new cultural strategy covering the local arts, events and festivals programme.	Adoption of a new culture strategy that enhances quality of life, health and wellbeing and brings communities together	Adoption of a new Cultural Strategy that enhances quality of life, health and wellbeing and brings communities together	Adoption	Within SKDC control	Achieved	The Cultural Strategy 2020-23 was adopted by Cabinet in September 2020. An independent review of the Arts Service was carried out in 2021. That review identified that Cultural Strategy 2020-23 lacked a coherent action plan, objectives and performance measures. Thus, work began on a refreshed strategy. The new Cultural Strategy 2023-26 and accompanying action plan was adopted by Cabinet in July 2023. Six-monthly reports on delivery are presented to Culture & Leisure OSC.
Healthy & Strong Communities	Culture & Leisure	Develop and adopt a sport and physical activity strategy.	Adopting and achieving the outcomes of a Sports and Physical Activity Strategy for the district	Embed the sport and physical activity strategy	Ongoing	Within SKDC control	Achieved	The Sport & Physical Activity Strategy 2021-26 was adopted by Cabinet in December 2021. Six-monthly reports on delivery are presented to Culture & Leisure OSC. Key partners include LeisureSK Ltd, Active Lincolnshire and Inspire+. Notable outreach activities undertaken include health walks, attendance at fairs and fun days, health checks and community CPR training sessions. External funding was secured from the Together Fund administered by Active Lincolnshire to provide exercise classes in the district. LeisureSK Ltd also secured funding to deliver the Good Boost exercise programme aimed to improve musculoskeletal conditions and funding from Lincoln City Football Club to deliver cardiac rehabilitation classes.
				Develop a programme of outreach activities with the Council's leisure provider and other partners	Ongoing			
				Work with local partners to access funding available for projects	Ongoing			
Healthy & Strong Communities	Culture & Leisure	Improve and invest in local arts and cultural venues.	Fit for purpose facilities at Stamford Arts Centre, Grantham Guildhall and Bourne Exchange as well as other Council-supported arts and cultural assets across the district	Value of capital works carried out	Baseline + 10%	Within SKDC control	Achieved	A significant programme of capital works has been undertaken to improve the arts centres. At Stamford Arts Centre a refurbishment programme has been undertaken. The ballroom has been redecorated and roof replacement works were completed in Autumn 2023, a significant undertaking due to the specialist nature of the Collyweston roof slates.  In the Grantham Guildhall Arts Centre works are being undertaken to repair the roof to ensure the building is watertight and alleviate the periodic leaks in the building. The air conditioning system has been replaced. There are also plans to replace the boiler system which is old and ineffective which will improve the energy performance of the building.  The Bourne Corn Exchange has been through a scheme of refurbishment. Work is also currently ongoing to investigate improved signage to ensure this is commensurate with the building's identity and purpose.
				Maintaining properties to required standards	60% of action plan completed.			
Healthy & Strong Communities	Culture & Leisure	Review Arts services within the district with ambition to provide improved, efficient and accessible arts within the district.	A sustainably provisioned arts service for residents and visitors to the district.	Staff review and restructure	2021/22	Within SKDC control	Achieved	An independent review of the Arts Service was undertaken in 2021. The review concluded that the service had been delivered in a 'traditional' way for several years and had not undergone any transformation during this time. In response the Council restructured the service and delivered £300k savings. Opening hours of the arts venues have been reviewed and changes made, the programming at the centres is kept under constant review to ensure the offer is attractive to customers and offers value for money. Initial exploratory work has been undertaken to identify and assess future potential alternative delivery models. The new Cultural Strategy 2023-26 and accompanying action plan was adopted in July 2023.
				Review the programming and opening hours of the three centres in Grantham, Bourne and Stamford	2021/22			
				Identify potential future delivery models	2022/23			
				Develop new Cultural Strategy with clear action plan	2022/23			

Appendix A – Corporate Plan 2020-23: Culture & Leisure OSC – End of Plan Action Review

Corporate Plan 2020-2023 Priority	Overview & Scrutiny Committee	Corporate Plan 2020-2023 Action	Corporate Plan 2020-2023 Success Criteria	KPI	Target	SKDC Control	End of Plan Status	Summary Commentary
Growth & Our Economy	Culture & Leisure	Work with partners and attractions, to promote visitor economy and increase visitor spend in the District, including the adoption of a Tourism Strategic Framework.	Increase in the amount of visitor spend in the district. Development and adoption of a strategic document that positions SKDC at the centre of its Visitor Economy.	Number of newly engaged visitor economy attractions engaged	40	Substantially outside	Partially Achieved	The district's visitor economy is resilient. The latest STEAM data (2022) showed that the visitor economy has bounced back to but has yet to exceed pre-pandemic (2019) levels. South Kesteven has seen the second strongest recovery in Greater Lincolnshire. A total of £218.18 million was generated within the local economy through visitor and tourism business expenditure.  SKDC has worked to support Destination Lincolnshire to become an accredited Local Visitor Economy (LVEP) with Visit England. 85 visitor economy attractions have been engaged.  Work is ongoing to develop a Tourism Strategic Framework with Destination Lincolnshire.
				Increase in visitor economy spend	£113,344,000			
				Adoption of Tourism Strategic Framework	Adopted the Tourism Strategic Framework			
Growth & Our Economy	Culture & Leisure	Work closely with markets across South Kesteven and seek to maintain their viability.	Vibrant and financially viable markets that contribute to the footfall and economic activity of the town	Reduction of markets deficit from baseline	Baseline Reduction 10%+	Within SKDC control	Unachieved	SKDC runs three markets in Bourne, Grantham, and Stamford which operate with a financial deficit.  In order to respond to this an independent review of market operations was undertaken, which raised a number of improvements regarding operational and financial governance.

Priority ▲	Measured Biannually	Responsible Director ▲ Growth & Culture
<h1>Healthy And Strong Communities 11</h1>	<b>On Target</b> Current Status	Responsible Cabinet Member ▲ Culture & Visitor Economy

## Action

Improve and invest in the local arts & cultural venues across the District.

Measure ▲	Target	Achieved
1. Value of capital works carried out	Baseline + 10%	See Commentary
2. Maintaining properties to required standards	60% of action plan completed.	See Commentary

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Measure History ▲	Q4 2021-22	Q2 2022-23	Q4 2022-23
1. Value of capital works carried out	-	-	See Commentary
2. Maintaining properties to required standards	-	-	See Commentary

## Commentary

A significant amount of capital works has been undertaken across the arts venues over the previous 12 months. At Stamford this has included replacement roof works to ensure the building is watertight and a replacement projector has secured the ongoing continuation of the film programme. The boilers have been replaced at Bourne Corn Exchange and the Guildhall Arts Centre in Grantham. Planned future works include major roof repairs at Guildhall Arts Centre which are due to be completed in 2024/25.

Priority ▲	Measured Biannually	Responsible Director ▲ Growth & Culture
<h1>Healthy And Strong Communities 13</h1>	<b>On Target</b> Current Status	Responsible Cabinet Member ▲ Culture & Visitor Economy

## Action

Review Arts services within the district with ambition to provide improved, efficient and accessible arts within the district.

Measure ▲	Target	Achieved
1. Staff review and restructure	2021/22	See Commentary
2. Review the programming and opening hours of the three centres in Grantham, Bourne and Stamford	2021/22	See Commentary
3. Identify potential future delivery models	2022/23	See Commentary
4. Develop new Cultural Strategy with clear action plan	2022/23	See Commentary

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Measure History	Q4 2021-22 ▲	Q4 2022-23
1. Staff review and restructure	Report to Scrutiny 05/04/2022	See Commentary
2. Review the programming and opening hours of the three centres in Grantham, Bourne and Stamford	Report to Scrutiny 05/04/2023	See Commentary
3. Identify potential future delivery models	Report to Scrutiny 05/04/2024	See Commentary
4. Develop new Cultural Strategy with clear action plan	Report to Scrutiny 05/04/2025	See Commentary

## Commentary ▼

As a result of the arts review a full restructure of the team was undertaken and vacant posts recruited to. The performance and culture of the team has significantly improved under the leadership of the Arts and Cultural Services Manager. The opening hours of the artistic venues and programme has been completely overhauled and is now kept under constant review to ensure that the arts service continues to meet the needs of users and provides value for money. A refreshed Cultural Strategy was adopted in July 2023 which identifies a collaborative approach to providing cultural activity within the district with a clearly defined action plan. Following adoption of the Cultural Strategy specific key performance indicators were developed to measure the successful implementation of the strategy, these are reported to the Culture and Leisure OSC on a six monthly basis together with a progress update on the implementation of the action plan. Future delivery models will be explored during 2024/25 and this action has been captured on the Service Plan for the area.

Priority ▲	Measured Biannually	Responsible Director ▲ Growth & Culture
<h1>Healthy And Strong Communities 14</h1>	<b>On Target</b> Current Status	Responsible Cabinet Member ▲ Leisure

## Action

Develop and adopt a Sport and Physical Activity Strategy.

Measure ▲	Target	Achieved
1. Embed the sport and physical activity strategy	Ongoing	See Commentary
2. Develop a programme of outreach activities with the Council's leisure provider and other partners	Ongoing	See Commentary
3. Work with local partners to access funding available for projects	Ongoing	See Commentary

Measure History ▲	Q4 2021-22	Q2 2022-23	Q4 2022-23
1. Embed the sport and physical activity strategy	Not Reported	New Measure	See Commentary
2. Develop a programme of outreach activities with the Council's leisure provider and other partners	Not Reported	New Measure	See Commentary
3. Work with local partners to access funding available for projects	Not Reported	New Measure	See Commentary

## Commentary

Significant progress has been made in the delivery of the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy and six monthly updates are provided to the Culture and Leisure OSC. Progress updates include a range of outreach activities which has included health walks, attendance at fairs and fun days, health checks and community CPR training sessions. External funding was secured from the Together Fund administered by Active Lincolnshire. to provide exercise classes in the Deepings. LeisureSK Ltd also secured funding to deliver the Good Boost exercise programme aimed to improve musculoskeletal conditions and funding from Lincoln City Football Club to deliver cardiac rehabilitation classes.

Priority	Measured Quarterly	Responsible Director Growth & Culture
<h1>Delivery of Growth of Our Economy 9</h1>	<b>On Target</b> Current Status	Responsible Cabinet Member Culture & Visitor Economy

## Action

Work with partners and attractions, to promote visitor economy and increase visitor spend in the District, including the adoption of a Tourism Strategic Framework.

Measure	Target	Achieved
1. Number of newly engaged visitor economy attractions engaged	40	85
2. Increase in visitor economy spend	£113,344,000	£218,180,000
3. Adoption of Tourism Strategic Framework (Gross Value Added)	Adopted the Tourism Strategic Framework	Ongoing

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Measure History	Q1 2022-23	Q2 2022-23	Q3 2022-23	Q4 2022-23
1. Number of newly engaged visitor economy attractions engaged	38	55	61	73
2. Increase in visitor economy spend	£168,630,000	£168,630,000	£168,630,000	£168,630,000
3. Adoption of Tourism Strategic Framework (Gross Value Added)	Not Complete	On Target	On Target	Ongoing

## Commentary

The Economic Development Team have been waiting for Greater Lincolnshire Destination Management Plan (DMP) to be produced and agreed by the partnership. The document is in final drafting stage and the finished plan is expected by the end of the year. Once this takes place, the team will start the process of developing a Tourism Strategic Framework for South Kesteven. STEAM (Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor) is the evaluation model used by the Council to assess the visitor economy. The 2023 dataset is expected to be received and presented to Committee in Quarter 3 2024/25.

Priority ▲	Measured Annually	Responsible Director ▲ Growth & Culture
<b>Delivery of Growth of Our Economy 11</b>	<b>Below Target</b> Current Status	Responsible Cabinet Member ▲ Culture & Visitor Economy

#### Action

Work closely with markets across South Kesteven and seek to maintain their viability.

Measure ▲	Target	Achieved
1. Markets becoming cost neutral to SKDC	20%+ reduction of markets deficit from baseline: £54,983.96	8.68% (increase)

Measure History ▼	Q4 2021-22	Q4 2022-23	Q4 2023-24
1. Markets becoming cost neutral to SKDC	47.48%	4.87%	8.68% (increase)

#### Commentary

The net operational cost of the markets in 2023/24 was £59,755.59. This was an 8.68% outturn increase on the baseline of £54,983.96. It was also a 4.79% reduction on the annual budget of £62,760. In 2023/24 none of the markets made a profit. Bourne had a loss of £3,123.24, Grantham £52,897.45 and Stamford £3,74.80.

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Appendix C - Approved KPI Suite 2024-27 – Culture & Leisure OSC

Code	Overview & Scrutiny Committee	Action	Action Summary	Service Area	Owner/s	KPI Measure/s	Targets	Notes
COM2	Culture & Leisure	Deliver the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy and accompanying action plan.	Monitor progress of delivering document	Leisure, Culture & Place	Assistant Director: Culture & Leisure	% of total actions in action plan on target/complete	100% complete by end of the Plan (actions delivered in accordance with the timelines set out in the action plan.)	Impacts reported in SSEIs – physical activity levels, weight etc.
COM3	Culture & Leisure	Deliver the Cultural Strategy and accompanying action plan	Monitor progress of delivering document	Leisure, Culture & Place	Assistant Director: Culture & Leisure	% of total actions in action plan on target/complete	100% complete by end of the Plan (actions delivered in accordance with the timelines set out in the action plan.)	Impacts reported in SSEIs – Wellbeing, tourism etc.
COM4	Culture & Leisure	Invest in a sustainable leisure and cultural offer.	Financial performance of leisure/arts.	Leisure, Culture & Place	Assistant Director: Culture & Leisure / Leisure, Parks & Open Spaces Team Leader	Amount of Council subsidy required by Leisure Service	Reduce annual subsidy YOY	Impacts reported in SSEIs – swimming etc.
	Culture & Leisure				Assistant Director: Culture & Leisure / Leisure, Parks & Open Spaces Team Leader	Amount of Council subsidy required by Arts Service.	Reduce annual subsidy YOY	N/A
	Culture & Leisure				Assistant Director: Culture & Leisure / Leisure, Parks & Open Spaces Team Leader	Amount of external funding secured to support the Arts service.	Increase amount of funding secured YOY	Social Value calculated using Moving Communities social value calculator tool.
	Culture & Leisure				Assistant Director: Culture & Leisure / Leisure, Parks & Open Spaces Team Leader	Attendance at Leisure Centres (presented for each centre and activity type: gym, swim, casual attendance)	YOY growth	N/A
	Culture & Leisure				Assistant Director: Culture & Leisure / Leisure, Parks & Open Spaces Team Leader	Total social value attributable to each leisure centre	YOY growth	N/A
COM5	Culture & Leisure	Ensure that our leisure facilities and arts venues are sustainable and meet future needs.	Physical condition of facilities & venues.	Leisure, Culture & Place	Assistant Director: Culture & Leisure / Leisure, Parks & Open Spaces Team Leader	Number of rectifications issued for: cleanliness and maintenance (six monthly) (presented for each centre)	6 monthly reduction (reported to C&L OSC as part of 6 monthly update)	Rectifications result of inspections by Leisure, Parks & Open Spaces Team Leader as part of the contract management.
	Culture & Leisure				Assistant Director: Culture & Leisure / Leisure, Parks & Open Spaces Team Leader	Quest Plus accreditation (external sector quality assessment for each centre)	Achieve and maintain Sport England's Quest Plus Facility Management accreditation scheme with a minimum 'Good' banding	N/A
	Culture & Leisure				Assistant Director: Culture & Leisure / Leisure, Parks & Open Spaces Team Leader	Public satisfaction score for leisure centres broken down by overall satisfaction, Net Promotor Score (NPS), in centre activity, Cleanliness (presented for each centre)	Improvements for all metrics YOY	Through annual Sport England Moving Communities Community Survey

Code	Overview & Scrutiny Committee	Action	Action Summary	Service Area	Owner/s	KPI Measure/s	Targets	Notes
COM6	Culture & Leisure	Enable and support a flourishing and vibrant artistic and cultural scene	Performance of arts service.	Leisure, Culture & Place	Assistant Director: Culture & Leisure / Arts & Cultural Services Manager	Attendance numbers at venues (presented by venue and by whether the attendee is a resident of SKDC)	Stamford Yearly Target: 37,000 tickets (financial year 24-25)	N/A
	Culture & Leisure				Assistant Director: Culture & Leisure / Arts & Cultural Services Manager		Guildhall Yearly Target: 28,000 tickets (financial year 24-25)	N/A
	Culture & Leisure				Assistant Director: Culture & Leisure / Arts & Cultural Services Manager	Take up of Rural Touring programme across the district.	To continue funding for the next 3 years	(Financial year, reports received from company October and Feb)
	Culture & Leisure				Assistant Director: Culture & Leisure / Arts & Cultural Services Manager		14 outputs arranged via Live and Local	
	Culture & Leisure				Assistant Director: Culture & Leisure / Arts & Cultural Services Manager	Number of outreach events held or supported by the Arts and Cultural Services team	Utilise outreach budget so organise one activity/event with SKDC in the financial year.	Use the venues as and when appropriate to facilitate events and workshops from community practitioners that align with cultural strategy and venue aims and goals.
	Culture & Leisure				Assistant Director: Culture & Leisure / Arts & Cultural Services Manager	Bourne Corn Exchange Events sold through SKDC box office	5 events to be sold through Spektrix for events at BCE, aim for 500 tickets to be sold (financial year)	To increase income and acquire audience intelligence.
COM10	Culture & Leisure	Maintain and enhance our green areas across the District.	Parks & Street Scene	Leisure, Culture & Place	Assistant Director: Culture & Leisure / Leisure, Parks & Open Spaces Team Leader	Public satisfaction score from annual surveys for: Wyndham Park, Queen Elizabeth and Dysart Park	YOY improved satisfaction	N/A
	Culture & Leisure				Assistant Director: Culture & Leisure / Leisure, Parks & Open Spaces Team Leader	Number of complaints received relating to street cleansing (monthly)	TBC	N/A
	Culture & Leisure				Assistant Director: Culture & Leisure / Leisure, Parks & Open Spaces Team Leader	Number of complaints received relating to grounds maintenance (monthly)	TBC	N/A
	Culture & Leisure				Assistant Director: Culture & Leisure / Leisure, Parks & Open Spaces Team Leader	% of non-hazardous fly-tipping removed within 3 days of notification (monthly)	TBC	N/A
ENVIRO4	Culture & Leisure	Improve the energy efficiency of the leisure estate and review further renewable energy opportunities.	Energy efficiency of leisure centres	Leisure, Culture & Place	Leisure, Parks & Open Spaces Team Leader	Energy Consumption per sq m.	For information only	Report amount of funding secured to support energy efficiencies and Display Energy Certificate (Energy Performance Operational Rating) as PIs.
	Culture & Leisure				Leisure, Parks & Open Spaces Team Leader	Review and Implementation of energy conservation measures	Number of actions/options reviewed (cumulative)	
	Culture & Leisure				Leisure, Parks & Open Spaces Team Leader		Number of actions implemented	

Appendix C - Approved KPI Suite 2024-27 – Culture & Leisure OSC

Code	Overview & Scrutiny Committee	Action	Action Summary	Service Area	Owner/s	KPI Measure/s	Targets	Notes
ECON8	Culture & Leisure	Bring forward a step change in the way Council-run Street markets are presented, operated, marketed and promoted.	Performance of Council run Markets	Waste & Markets	Head of Waste & Markets	Develop an Operational Delivery Plan which aligns with the strategic goals of the markets.	100% complete by end of the Plan	N/A
	Culture & Leisure				Head of Waste & Markets	Increase the number of regular stall holders at Bourne and Grantham Market from 23/24 baseline.	YOY increase	N/A
	Culture & Leisure				Head of Waste & Markets	Increase dwell time from 23/24 baseline.	YOY increase	N/A
ECON10	Culture & Leisure	Continue to promote and develop South Kesteven as an attractive visitor destination, focusing on our cultural and heritage strengths	Tourism	Economic Development	Head of Economic Development	Adoption of Tourism Strategic Framework	Adopted the Tourism Strategic Framework	N/A
	Culture & Leisure				Head of Economic Development	Increase annual visitor numbers to South Kesteven	3% annual increase in visitor numbers	N/A
	Culture & Leisure				Head of Economic Development	Increase annual spend by visitors to the district	3% increase in annual visitor spend (economic impact)	N/A
COM5	Culture & Leisure	Ensure that our leisure facilities and arts venues are sustainable and meet future needs.	Physical condition of facilities & venues.	Leisure, Culture & Place	Assistant Director: Culture & Leisure / Leisure, Parks & Open Spaces Team Leader	Number of rectifications issued for: cleanliness and maintenance (six monthly) (presented for each centre)	6 monthly reduction (reported to C&L OSC as part of 6 monthly update)	Economic data and impacts: GVA, productivity, business base, employment, wages etc reported by SSEIs.
	Culture & Leisure				Assistant Director: Culture & Leisure / Leisure, Parks & Open Spaces Team Leader	Successful management of approved budget	Forecast surplus/deficit to be within 1% of net cost of service	N/A
	Culture & Leisure				Assistant Director: Culture & Leisure / Leisure, Parks & Open Spaces Team Leader	% of working balance to net cost of service	10%	N/A
	Culture & Leisure				Assistant Director: Culture & Leisure / Leisure, Parks & Open Spaces Team Leader	% of total actions in action plan on target/complete	100% complete by end of the Plan (actions delivered in accordance with the timelines set out in the action plan.)	N/A
	Culture & Leisure				Assistant Director: Culture & Leisure / Leisure, Parks & Open Spaces Team Leader	Ratio of planned to reactive repair works	Year 1 - 30:70	N/A
	Culture & Leisure				Assistant Director: Culture & Leisure / Leisure, Parks & Open Spaces Team Leader		Year 2 - 40:60	N/A
	Culture & Leisure				Assistant Director: Culture & Leisure / Leisure, Parks & Open Spaces Team Leader		Year 3 - 50:50	N/A

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SOUTH  
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COUNCIL



## Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 18 June 2024

Report of Councillor Paul Stokes,  
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member  
for Leisure and Culture

### Draft Play Area Strategy

#### Report Author

Michael Chester, Team Leader - Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces

 [michael.chester@southkesteven.gov.uk](mailto:michael.chester@southkesteven.gov.uk)

#### Purpose of Report

To consider the draft Play Area Strategy for South Kesteven

#### Recommendations

**In recognising the work undertaken to develop the draft Play Area Strategy for South Kesteven, it is recommended that the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee:**

1. **Reviews and comments on the draft Play Area Strategy and considers any amendments for inclusion.**
2. **Recommends the draft Play Area Strategy to Cabinet for approval.**
3. **Request that an Action Plan be developed and presented to a future Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee, if the Strategy is approved by Cabinet.**

Decision Information	
Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Connecting communities Effective Council
Which wards are impacted?	All wards

## 1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

### ***Finance and Procurement***

- 1.1 The development of a Play Area Strategy is welcomed in order set out a framework and provide clarity on the future responsibilities of the District Council. The Strategy sets out the current play area locations, the current inspection and maintenance methodologies that are deployed and how a process to manage any future adoptions or transfers to Town and Parish Councils.
- 1.2 During financial year 2023/24, a decision was made to appoint external inspection contractors to undertake the monthly operational play equipment inspections and undertake a lifespan audit on all the play equipment at an annual cost of £25,82. The contractor is also currently assessing the life expectancy of the current play equipment at the 38 locations as set out in the Strategy. The Council does not have the financial resources to replace all the equipment that has reached or is reaching end of life and so it is recommended that a prioritisation replacement programme is undertaken alongside exploring options to transfer specific play areas to third parties who will be able to access external funding.

Completed by: **Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer**

### ***Legal and Governance***

- 1.3 There are no legal and governance implications arising from this report.

Completed by: **James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer**

### ***Risk and Mitigation***

- 1.4 To satisfy the requirements of BS EN1176 Zurich Insurance undertake six monthly independent inspections of all the play equipment.

Completed by: **Tracey Elliott, Governance and Risk Officer**

### ***Health and Safety***

- 1.5 The Health and Safety Executive recommend that at least one inspection is undertaken every year by an independent suitably qualified body such as The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), to ensure the long-term safety of the site, equipment and ancillary item. This also meets the legal and insurance responsibilities as well as complying with the requirements of BS EN1176 (the British and European Playground Standard). As a Council this is undertaken by Zurich as detailed in paragraph 1.5.
- 1.6 In addition to this the Council has a defined inspection regime in place and employs qualified staff to undertake weekly visual inspections, and has commissioned KOMPAN to undertake monthly operational inspections. All inspection findings are recorded in real time on a specialist mobile app called PSS Live.
- 1.7 Following the installation of any new play area an independent post installation inspection is carried out to ensure that the playground meets modern standards and has been installed correctly.

Completed by: **Phil Swinton, Health and Safety & Emergency Planning Manager**

## **2. Background to the Report**

- 2.1 The Council's Corporate Plan (2024-27) sets out the corporate ambition to be 'A thriving District to live in, work and visit' with the aim of encouraging physical activity to support healthy lifestyles and reduce health inequalities. Underpinning this are the key priorities for the Council of 'Connecting Communities' and being an 'Effective Council'.
- 2.2 The provision of high-quality play areas supports the Council's corporate ambitions and provides opportunities for improved health and wellbeing outcomes for local communities.

2.3 A draft Play Area Strategy (the Strategy) has been developed to ensure that the Council effectively manages the 38 play areas across the District that it is currently responsible for, providing young people with safe and sustainable places to play. This is attached at **Appendix One**.

2.4 The Strategy will also complement the work being undertaken to deliver the Council's Sport and Physical Activity Strategy (2021-26) by supporting children and young people to meet Sport England's target for them to be considered active, which is to undertake an average of 60 plus minutes of exercise per day.

2.5 The Council recognises that there has been a historical lack of investment in its play areas and that the costs associated with maintaining them is ever increasing. This in turn increases the financial pressures on the budgets available, going forwards the available budget set aside will require careful future management to ensure that resources are being used effectively and generating the optimum outcomes.

2.6 The Council's key priorities for play areas, as outlined within the Strategy, are to:

- Prioritise strategic capital spending on play area improvements.
- Secure and utilise appropriate S106 developer contributions.
- Identify external funding opportunities to rejuvenate play areas.
- Continue a robust inspection regime to ensure play areas are safe.
- Collaborate on the design of play areas with relevant Ward Members, local communities and external partners.
- Promote the availability of play areas to both residents and visitors.
- Undertake audits of play areas to identify capital investment programmes based on the age and condition of the equipment.
- Facilitate a transfer of play areas to local Town and Parish Councils where there is appetite to do so.

2.7 In recent years the Council has attracted significant external funding by working with local groups which has allowed the rejuvenation of some of its play areas. Examples of this include the Wyndham Park Senior Play Area which was upgraded in 2022, and the Gonerby Hill Foot Play Area which was upgraded in 2023. Work is also currently underway to refurbish the Beeden Park Play Area following a successful award of grant funding by FCC Communities Foundation Limited in March this year. The procurement exercise to secure a contractor is currently live and the refurbishment is scheduled to commence during early Autumn 2024.

2.8 The Play Area Strategy aims to allow the Council to prioritise those play areas and pieces of equipment which require capital investment and also allow the Council to continue working with external stakeholders to identify funding opportunities.

- 2.9 The Strategy contains a process to be followed for Play Area Investment which will be utilised when enquiries are received from members of the public, Ward Members and local stakeholders.
- 2.10 In ensuring the Council maintains its play areas to a safe standard, the Strategy also details the inspection and maintenance regime which is undertaken and how the results from this can help to support the prioritisation of investment.
- 2.11 The Strategy contains the Council's future design principles for new and upgraded play areas when considering investment or refurbishment. New housing developments will be required to provide new play and open space facilities and the same principles will be applied for designing these new facilities. Where new play facilities are delivered through planning applications funding arrangements will be secured for their ongoing maintenance.
- 2.12 In summary this Strategy will help to prioritise the maintenance, development, and refurbishment of play areas within the District, taking into account any opportunities to transfer play areas to the ownership of Town or Parish Councils.

### **3. Key Considerations**

- 3.1 Spend on Play Areas is discretionary for the Council, and it is important that the management and investment into them demonstrates value for money and that the resources invested deliver the priorities the Council is seeking. This Play Area Strategy aligns with the corporate vision and takes account of the Council's challenging financial backdrop.

### **4. Other Options Considered**

- 4.1 Within its Corporate Plan there is a key theme of supporting healthier lifestyles and the provision of high-quality play areas supports this ambition. The Council also has a legal and moral responsibility of care to children using the play areas its responsible for and meeting the expectations of parents in keeping their children safe from harm. Therefore the 'do nothing' option was discounted.

### **5. Reasons for the Recommendations**

- 5.1 The Play Area Strategy will become the guiding principal document to enable the Council to prioritise the replacement of equipment or refurbishment of play areas within the allocated budget. It will be a material consideration for planning applications and be used to support decisions on planning applications. It is important that Members asses the contents of the Strategy to ensure that it meets the Council's vision for the service, considering any amendments for inclusion.
- 5.2 The Strategy will receive corporate branding and artwork, along with any amendments required prior to approval by Cabinet.

## **6. Appendices**

### 6.1 Appendix One – Draft Play Area Strategy for South Kesteven



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# South Kesteven District Council

## Play Area Strategy

DRAFT

Version:

5

Date:

May 2024

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## Introduction

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South Kesteven District Council's Corporate Plan (2024 – 2027) sets out the corporate ambition to be 'A thriving District to live in, work and visit' with the aim of encouraging physical activity to support healthy lifestyles and reduce health inequalities.

The Council is responsible for 38 play areas, as shown in **Appendix 1 and Table Two**, across the district which provide safe and sustainable places for young people to play, supporting them to maintain and improve their quality of life. Provision of play areas also helps to support children and young people to meet Sport England's target for them to be considered active, which is to undertake an average of 60 plus minutes of exercise per day.

It is vital that the Council uses its resources effectively to ensure that play areas can remain inclusive and attractive, are easily accessible for all users, and comply with health and safety requirements. There are some challenges facing South Kesteven in respect of its play areas, which include an historical lack of investment, and the costs associated with adequately maintaining the facilities within available budgets, ensuring that spend is directed where it is most needed.

The Council also recognises that there may be a need for additional play areas within the district, for example to accompany any major new housing developments. The Council aims to take an active role in ensuring that any new play areas meet the local need and are developed to a high standard, as well as limiting the exposure to ongoing maintenance liabilities in the longer term.

In assessing the adoption of any additional play areas, the Council will be guided by the 2023 Open Space, Sports and Recreation Study which complements the Council's Local Plan, and liaise with developers at an early stage to ensure that the requirements are understood. The Council is also committed to work with partner organisations in the design and development of any new play areas to ensure they offer a wide variety of inclusive equipment that supports the needs of all children and young people.

The Play Area Strategy will help to prioritise the maintenance, development, and refurbishment of play areas within the district, taking into account any opportunities to transfer play areas to the ownership of town or parish councils. Having a robust play area inspection process is viewed as an integral part of providing the service.

## Play Area Strategy

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Central Government and Sport England both recognise the importance that physical activity has on the health and wellbeing of children and young people, through their respective strategies 'Get Active: A Strategy for the future of Sport and Physical Activity, and Uniting the Movement'. Furthermore, the Council's Corporate Plan (2024 to 2027) sets out the Council's priorities with a key theme of supporting healthier lifestyles. The provision of high-quality play areas supports the Council's corporate ambition and provides opportunities for improved health and wellbeing outcomes for local communities.

Delivery of the Council's Play Area Strategy will ensure that residents have access to high quality play areas in key locations across the district. To complement the financial resources the Council has within its budget

framework the Council will continue to identify external funding opportunities to facilitate the future development of play areas.

When looking at housing growth the Council will ensure that adequate open space including play facilities are included as part of the planning process. New play areas should form an integral part of the development layout however where it cannot be provided on-site a financial contribution towards provision elsewhere will be sought. In all cases, it is expected that provisions will be made for the ongoing future maintenance of any play facilities and this will be secured through the planning process either through financial contributions or other suitable management strategies.

The nature of play is continuously evolving, and the Council will need to ensure that, working with partner organisations, play areas are inclusive, exciting and are inter-generational spaces for all to enjoy.

The Council will also need to identify the future improvement and development requirements for current play areas to ensure it has a portfolio that is fit for current and future needs and demands.

## **Our Priorities**

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The Council's key priorities for play areas are to ensure that they are accessible to all, providing quality play equipment that is exciting and includes both individual and social play elements. To achieve this the Council will:

- Prioritise strategic capital spending on play area improvements
- Secure and utilise appropriate S106 developer contributions
- Identify external funding opportunities to rejuvenate play areas
- Continue a robust inspection regime to ensure play areas are safe
- Collaborate on the design of play areas with relevant ward members, local communities and external partners
- Promote play areas to both residents and visitors
- Undertake audits of play areas to identify capital investment programmes based on the age and condition of the equipment
- Transfer the assets to local Town and Parish Councils where there is appetite to do so

As part of the Local Plan Review an updated Open Space, Sports and Recreation Study is currently being undertaken which will consider the requirements for play areas and informal activity spaces both now and in the future taking into account planned development. This would inform the planning policy requirements for future play areas that will need to be provided as part of new development.

## **Local and National Context**

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The Play Strategy is informed by a wide range of local and national initiatives to improve the health and wellbeing of local residents and communities as follows:

**Sport England** has a priority to tackle inactivity with a specific ambition to increase levels of activity of children and young people from the age of 5. The provision of high-quality accessible play equipment and improved

opportunities for play supports this aim. This is one of the five big issues within their Strategy ‘Uniting the Movement’.

**National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** identifies sport and activity as a fundamental part of the planning and delivery of sustainable communities. The objectives also look to protect existing facilities, enhance the quality, accessibility and management of existing facilities, and provide new facilities to meet demand.

**South Kesteven District Council’s Sport and Physical Activity Strategy (2021 – 2026)** sets out the Council’s aims to provide the support our residents need now and, in the future, to build healthy and strong communities and encourage residents to live healthy, active lifestyles.

**Fields in Trust (FIT) guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play** sets out the required provision for outdoor sports, play and informal open space. The recommendations aim to ensure that the provision of outdoor sport, play and informal open space is of a sufficient size to enable effective use; is located in an accessible location and in close proximity to dwellings; and of a quality to maintain longevity and to encourage its continued use.

FIT categorise designated play areas into three types:

- Local Areas for Play (LAPs) aimed at very young children within a 100m walking distance from dwellings
- Locally Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) aimed at children who can go out to play independently within a 400m walking distance from dwellings
- Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs) aimed at older children within a 1000m walking distance from dwellings

These can be complemented by other facilities including Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs) and skateboard parks. **Table One** below sets out the quantity requirements per 1,000 population, the indicative walking distances and the quality guidelines:

<b>Table One – Fields in Trust guidance per 1000 population</b>			
<b>Open Space Typology</b>	<b>Quantity Guideline (hectares)</b>	<b>Walking Guideline</b>	<b>Quality Guideline</b>
Playing pitches	1.20	1,200m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Quality appropriate to the intended level of performance, designed to appropriate technical standards</li> <li>- Located where they are of the most value to the community to be served</li> <li>- Sufficiently diverse recreational use for the whole community</li> <li>- Appropriately landscaped</li> </ul>
All outdoor sports	1.60	1,200m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Maintained safely and to the highest possible condition with available finance</li> <li>- Positively managed taking account of the need to repair and replacement over time as necessary</li> <li>- Provision of ancillary facilities and equipment</li> <li>- Provision of footpaths</li> <li>- Designed so as to be free of the fear of harm or crime</li> </ul>
Equipped/designated play areas	0.25	LAPs – 100m LEAPs – 400m NEAPs – 1,000m	
Other outdoor provision (MUGAs and skateboard parks)	0.30	700m	

## Current Provision

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South Kesteven District Council currently manages 38 play areas across the district in 33 locations, these being situated on a mixture of Council housing estates, formal park settings and open space areas. In October 2022 a review of the Council's play areas was undertaken by the Council's Corporate Health and Safety team along with Officers responsible for the inspection of the play areas using Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) guidelines.

This review identified a Health and Safety RAG status for each play area based on the condition of the play equipment and floor surface which was used to determine the frequency of visual and operational inspections to be undertaken. **Table Two** below summarises each play area the Council is currently responsible for and its location, and **Appendix One** demonstrates the spread of play areas across the district.

<b>Table Two – SKDC Play Areas and Locations</b>	
<b>Locality</b>	<b>Play Area</b>
Stamford	Andrew Road, PE9 1HN
Stamford	College Close, PE9 1FN
Stamford	Elgar Way, PE9 1EY
Stamford	Elizabeth Road, PE9 1HY
Stamford	Empingham Road, PE9 2GR
Stamford	Foxglove Road, PE9 4BW
Stamford	Lonsdale Road, PE9 2SF
Grantham	Arnoldfield Adventure, NG 31 8HU
Grantham	Beechcroft Road, NG31 7NL
Grantham	Dysart Park, NG31 6JB (x3 play areas)
Grantham	Gonerby Hill Foot, NG31 8HU
Grantham	Harrowby Lane, NG31 9QY
Grantham	Hornsby Road, NG31 7RE
Grantham	Larch Close, NG31 7XL
Grantham	Tissington Road, NG31 7FP
Grantham	Queen Elizabeth Park, NG31 8FJ
Grantham	Princess Drive, NG31 9QA
Grantham	Tyndal Road, NG31 8AH
Grantham	Wyndham Park, NG31 9BB (x4 play areas)
Denton	Hungate Road, NG31 1LP
Langtoft	Manor Close, PE6 9LY
Morton	The Crescent, PE10 0NX
South Witham	Troughton Walk, NG33 5PR
Witham on the Hill	Main Street, PE10 0JH
Market Deeping	Church Street, PE6 8AL
Market Deeping	Kesteven Drive, PE6 8DU
Market Deeping	Wellington Way, PE6 8LF
Deeping St James	Crowson Way, PE6 8EY
Deeping St James	Churchfield Close, PE6 8PP
Deeping St James	Hereward Way, PE6 8QB
Bourne	Northfields, PE10 9DB
Bourne	Pinewood Close, PE10 9RL
Bourne	Wellhead, PE10 9PQ

## Inspection and Maintenance of Play Areas

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The Council has a legal responsibility to those using the play areas it is responsible for and is required to have a robust inspection and maintenance regime in place. Inspections of play equipment undertaken should meet the requirements of BS EN1176 part 7 – Guidance for installation, inspection, maintenance, and operation. The provision of a robust inspection and maintenance regime for play areas is also recommended as best practice by the Department for National Heritage, the British Standards Institute, the Health and Safety Executive, and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA).

The British and European safety standard BS EN1176 was published in 2017. In addition to setting the standards to be maintained, this also details good practice in relation to the design, manufacture, installation and maintenance of play equipment, as well as playground surfaces.

The guidance recognises that the standards are not retrospective or a legal requirement, and that equipment installed prior to 2017 will most likely have met previous standards. Whilst the play areas managed by the Council contain equipment and surfacing of varying ages, and therefore may contain older equipment which does not meet current standards, this does not necessarily mean that it is unsafe or that remedial action is required.

Where it is no longer possible to replace parts on ageing equipment, there may be times where equipment must be removed, any new equipment installed will then need to meet current standards.

The Council has a defined inspection regime in place which covers the whole site and not just the play equipment and employs trained staff to undertake visual and operational inspections. This has been complemented recently by commissioning an external contractor, KOMPAN, to undertake monthly operational inspections on behalf of the Council. As well as providing an independent assessment, KOMPAN are undertaking a lifespan audit on all pieces of play equipment, this information will assist the Council in prioritising play areas, and specific pieces of equipment, which require attention or investment.

All inspection findings undertaken by both Council Officers and KOMPAN are recorded in real time on a specialist mobile app called Public Sector Software Live (PSS Live) with any minor and major remedial works required being recorded.

Inspections occur on the following basis:

- **Weekly Visual Inspection** – a visual assessment is made of the condition of equipment and the play area. Frequency of inspections can vary and are identified by the risk assessment and risk rating associated by each play area.
- **Monthly Operational Inspection** – this looks in more detail at the equipment and requires the inspector to physically use the equipment and look for signs of deterioration. This is currently being undertaken by KOMPAN on behalf of the Council.
- **Six Monthly Inspection** – this is undertaken by Zurich Insurance, and provides external assurance to the Council. This regime satisfies the British and European safety standard BS EN1176, and is over and above the recommendation of the Health and Safety Executive that at least one inspection is undertaken every year from an independent suitably qualified body such as RoSPA.

- **Post Installation Inspections** – these are carried out following the installation of any new play area or major refurbishment programme to ensure that the playground meets modern standards and has been correctly installed.

Where it is not possible for Council Officers to undertake minor remedial works to play equipment, then specialist contractors or equipment providers are used to undertake the highlighted remedial works from any of the inspections. Any works conducted are also recorded on the PSS app to provide an audit trail.

## **Future Design Principles**

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When considering any investment or refurbishment the Council will give consideration to the type and range of play equipment, including surfacing, to ensure that this is accessible for users with a range of abilities, and appropriate to the type of play area and its setting.

- Equipment should be laid out to maximise the play value and provide the best use of the space available. Special attention needs to be given to new or existing tree planting, orientation (particularly for metal slides) and fall areas – with plenty of ‘slack space’ included around and between equipment to allow free movement and to facilitate different types of informal play.
- Equipment should be arranged to ensure that younger children do not feel intimidated by older children and teenagers.
- Timber elements deteriorate most when buried in, or are in contact with, the ground. Therefore, any timber structures must be secured into the ground using metal feet to avoid contact and deterioration. All manufactured timber equipment must be supplied with a minimum 15 – 20 year guarantee. Bespoke, natural timber equipment needs to be treated correctly with a safe, long lasting, non-reactive preservative to ensure a minimum 10 year life.
- Rope equipment and netting must be sufficiently heavy duty and durable.
- Large, oversized and distinctive equipment is to be welcomed.
- Exciting, innovative and bespoke equipment, that will appeal to a wide range of user groups and provides a significantly high level of play value may be deemed to offer a level of play experience equivalent to more than one piece of standard equipment.
- Choosing the best surface for an area is dependent on many variables and should be carefully considered based on the activities planned and ease of maintenance.
- Robust finishes and high-quality detailing are essential to create an attractive hardwearing play area that will be suitably long lasting and fit for purpose.
- The opportunity for surfaces to add play value or to be a play feature, designed for traditional games or imaginative play should be considered.
- Acceptable types of bound surface include wetpour, grass matting and carpet system artificial grass. This should be used primarily as it has low ongoing maintenance requirements, however loose fill surfaces such as bark nuggets, play safe pea gravel and play sand may be considered but the needs must be balanced against routine maintenance requirements.

All safety surfacing must conform to the relevant British Standards relating to the type of play equipment and the level of impact attenuation required, in addition to the quality of the product used.

## Process for Adopting New Play Areas

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Before a completed play area is legally transferred to the Council from a developer the following information will be required prior to the transfer:

- Land ownership and boundary responsibility with a Land Transfer Map as a Portable Document Format (PDF) and a Geographic Information System (GIS) Shapefile
- As built drawing(s)
- Anticipated routine monitoring and inspection requirements for the play area including trees
- Maintenance schedule setting out the frequency and types of operation for the scheme including planting during establishment and once established
- National Bureau of Standards (NBS) Landscape specification for hard and soft landscaping maintenance operation where relevant
- Confirmation of payment of agreed commuted sum figure to cover maintenance requirements for a 25 year period which is consistent with the Council's supplementary planning document on open spaces

**Table Three** below sets out South Kesteven District Council's handover process:

<b>Table Three – Handover Process for new play areas</b>	
Inspection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Council to be notified on completion of the scheme and arrange an inspection to confirm build in accordance with the approved details.</li><li>• The Council will need to agree the scheme has been installed satisfactorily or identify any defects and remedial work required</li></ul>
Safety Audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Arrange an inspection to ensure any outstanding works are agreed before a RoSPA post-installation inspection is undertaken.</li><li>• Any items flagged and recorded to be rectified.</li></ul>
Maintenance Period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Agree the start date of the 12-month maintenance of the scheme. The maintenance period will normally begin once any outstanding or remedial works have been completed satisfactorily. The Council should be contacted one month before the end of the agreed maintenance period to arrange another inspection.</li><li>• On completion of the 12-month maintenance period, a further RoSPA inspection report must be provided and any items flagged by the report will need to be rectified.</li></ul>
Transfer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Once all outstanding or remedial work is completed satisfactorily, the scheme is ready to be adopted. The Council will confirm the final Commuted Sum figure to be paid.</li></ul>

## Transferring Ownership of Play Areas

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Where possible the Council is committed to transferring assets to local Town and Parish Councils. This would bring further benefits in them being better positioned to attract grant funding, as well as ensuring that the facilities continue to serve and meet the needs of local communities.

The Council recognises that the current condition of its play areas may require a level of capital investment prior to asset transfers taking place. The Council will adopt a policy of actively seeking opportunities to asset transfer play areas, identifying any required investment during the early stages of discussions and, if appropriate, seek an agreement in principle to proceed with an agreed level of investment.

For an asset transfer to be undertaken the following process would be followed:

- Engagement with Town and Parish Councils to establish interest
- Once interest has been established, engagement with the Council's Property Team to discuss asset transfer process
- Copies of insurance inspection reports to be provided in relation to the play area
- Confirmation of any agreed improvements as part of the transfer
- Restrictive covenant placed on the land to ensure it can only be used as a play area and must be maintained as such
- Confirmation of transfer – freehold or leasehold arrangement
- Both sides would be required to cover their own legal costs
- Under the Local Government Act 1972 Section 123 the Council would need to advertise the site in the local press for two weeks to give consideration to any objections.
- Dependant on the size of the site, an external valuation may be required and would be arranged by the Council if deemed necessary.

#### **Process for Play Area Investment**

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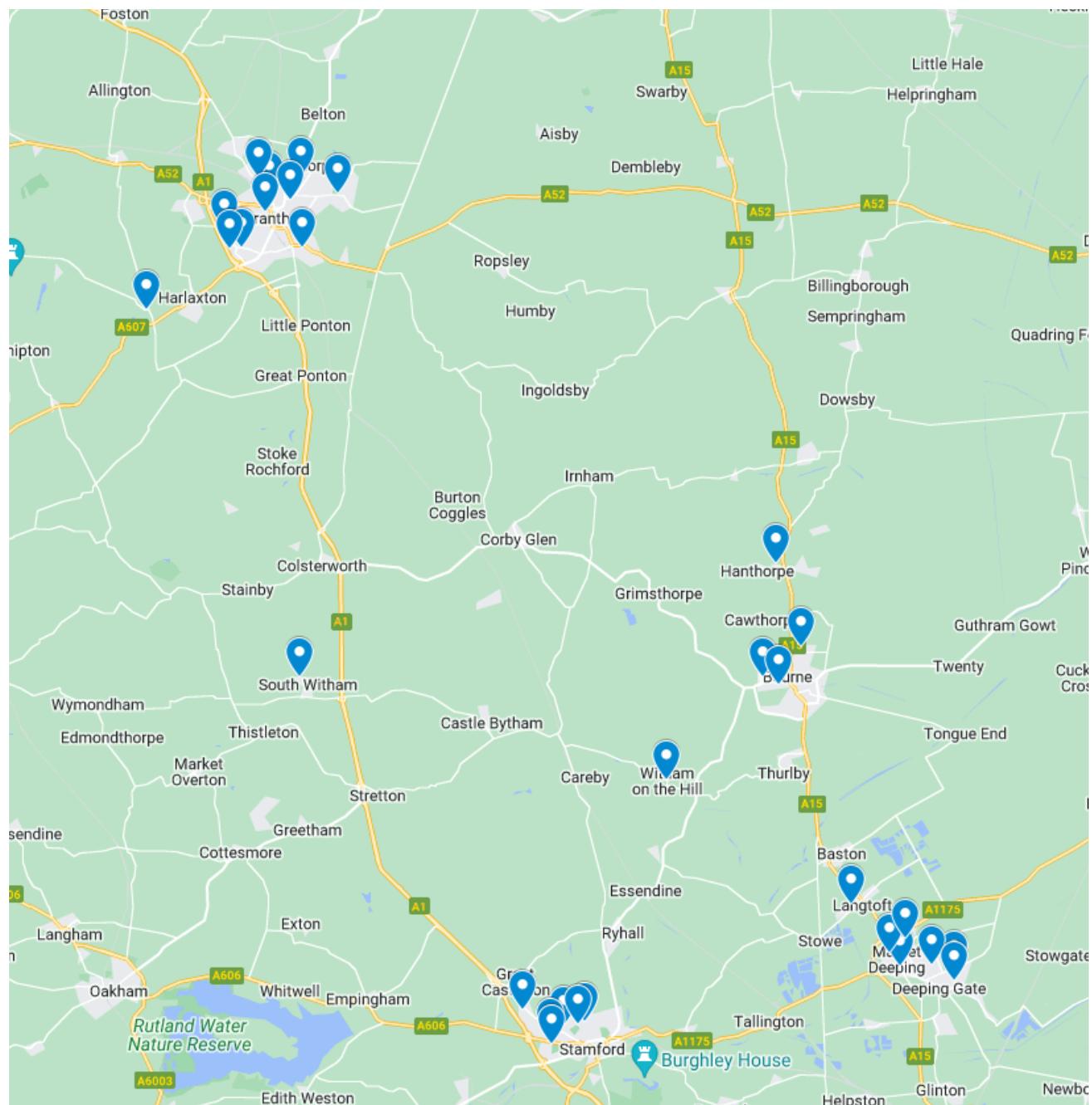
To ensure that investment into play areas across the district is undertaken in a way that is fair and utilises the Council's resources appropriately, **Table Four** below shows the step by step process which will be followed:

<b>Table Four – Process for play area investment</b>		
Step 1	Identify reported piece of equipment on PSS Live	
Step 2	Review the history of inspections and findings	
Step 3	Is the risk associated with the equipment 10 or above classed as either medium or high risk	If yes move to Step 4 If no move to Step 5
Step 4	If equipment is classed as high risk with a score of 16 or above, remove or isolate equipment from public use	Move to Step 7
Step 5	Is the life expectancy of the equipment within the next 12 months	If yes move to Step 7 If no move to Step 6
Step 6	Monitor the condition of the equipment through regular inspection regime and add to future replacement programme based on life expectancy	
Step 7	Contact play equipment suppliers to quote for replacement or suitable alternative	
Step 8	Identify whether budget or funding is available	If yes place order
Step 9	If more than one piece of equipment isolated or has a life expectancy within the next 12 months identify any grant funding opportunities	

## Appendices

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### Appendix One – A map of the Council's play areas it's responsible for across the District



## Resources

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*Fields In Trust – Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play, Beyond the Six Acre Standard* [Guidance-for-Outdoor-Sport-and-Play-England.pdf \(fieldsintrust.org\)](https://fieldsintrust.org/)

*Children's play areas – A guide to standards for playground equipment and surfacing (BS EN1176 series: 2017)*

*DLUHC National Planning Policy Framework* [National Planning Policy Framework \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk)

*South Kesteven District Council – Sport and Physical Activity Strategy (2021 – 2026)* [SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY.pdf \(southkesteven.gov.uk\)](https://southkesteven.gov.uk)

*South Kesteven District Council – Corporate Plan (2024 – 2027)* [South Kesteven District Council Corporate Plan - 2024 to 2027.pdf](https://southkesteven.gov.uk)

*RoSPA Play Safety* - [Advice and information - RoSPA](https://www.rospa.com)

*DCMS – Get Active: A Strategy for the future of Sport and Physical Activity (August 2023)* [Get Active: A Strategy for the future of sport and physical activity \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk)

*Sport England – Uniting the Movement (January 2021)* [Sport England - Uniting the Movement \(sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com\)](https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com)

*South Kesteven District Council – Local Plan for South Kesteven – Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (June 2012)* [Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document: June 2012 \(southkesteven.gov.uk\)](https://southkesteven.gov.uk)

# Agenda Item 10

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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of the Local Government Act 1972.

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**LeisureSK Ltd**

**Financial Regulations**

**January 2021**

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## Introduction

Financial Regulations provide the internal framework for managing LeisureSK Limited's (the 'Company's') financial affairs. They apply to all directors and staff and anyone else who acts on behalf of the Company. References to the Council, refer to South Kesteven District Council, who is the 100% owner of the Company.

Responsibility is broken down between four distinct areas and the following terms are used throughout the remainder of these regulations:

- Directors – the Company Directors, including where appropriate non-Executive director(s)
- Managers – people responsible for people and/or financial management, approving timesheets and/or payments within the Company
- Staff – all employees of the Company, covering both salaried and casual / timesheet based staff
- Finance Support – Staff providing accountancy or other finance support – this will include finance staff within the Company, support provided by Finance staff within South Kesteven District Council and any finance support purchased elsewhere (such as external accountants)

It is the responsibility of Senior Managers to ensure that all staff are aware of the existence and content of these Financial Regulations, as well as other internal regulatory documents, and to confirm that they comply with them.

It is the responsibility of the Directors to review these documents and ensure they remain fit for purpose, and to ensure compliance is adhered to throughout the Company (via management and independent audit).

## 1. Staffing (including payments)

### What are Staff?

The Company's staff are an essential part of providing the highest level of quality services. Salaries and wages form most of the expenditure of the Company. Being both a complex area and high value makes this an area requiring significant controls. It is therefore crucial that Human Resources procedures and guidance are followed precisely. Examples of such procedures include:

- recruitment;
- pay and rewards;
- attendance management;
- health and safety;
- discipline; and
- grievances

### Why are Staff important?

In order to provide the highest level of service, it is crucial that the Company recruits and retains high calibre, knowledgeable Staff, qualified to an appropriate level within the resources available. Payments to those Staff should be made accurately, timely, only when they are due and that payments accord with individuals' conditions of services.

### Key Controls

The key controls for staffing (from a financial procedures' standpoint) are:

- All payments are made in accordance with the terms and conditions of employment
- All HMRC regulations are complied with (including calculations of tax and national insurance and providing tax information within deadlines).
- All approved changes to salaried staff (including starters, leavers and overtime) are processed into Payroll systems in a timely and accurate manner
- Timesheets for casual staff are submitted by Staff, validated, approved and submitted onward to payroll in a timely manner
- Procedures are in place for forecasting staffing requirements and cost and these are reconciled to payments from the Company's bank account.
- Controls are implemented to ensure that officer's time is used efficiently and to the benefit of the Company.
- Checks are undertaken prior to employing new officers to ensure that they are appropriately qualified, experienced and trustworthy

### Responsibilities of Directors

- To arrange and control secure and reliable payment of salaries, wages, compensation or other emoluments to existing and former officers, and to determine and approve the associated procedures.

- To ensure that there is an appropriate pension system for all staff wishing to participate.
- To record and make arrangements for the accurate and timely payment of tax, superannuation and other deductions complying with statutory requirements.
- To make arrangements for payment of all travel and subsistence claims or financial loss allowance.
- To ensure that all Human Resource procedures and guidance are complete and reviewed regularly.
- To approve overall staffing levels and budgets.
- To receive regular performance reports regarding staff performance such as sickness, training, performance / appraisals and retention rates.

### **Responsibilities of Managers**

- To notify the payroll provider as soon as possible for any changes to contractual Staff (starters, leavers and amendments)
- To check and approve timesheets and expense claims in a timely manner
- To ensure appointments are made in accordance with Company procedures and this salary expenditure can be met from income projections.
- To ensure that adequate and effective systems and procedures are operated so that:
  - payments are authorised to bona fide officers only;
  - payments are only made where there is a valid entitlement;
  - conditions and contracts of employments are correctly applied; and
  - Staff names listed on the payroll are checked at regular intervals to verify accuracy and completeness.

### **Responsibilities of Finance Support**

- Developing reports and completing HMRC and pension returns.
- Uploading payroll files into the general ledger.
- Reconciling bank to general ledger to payroll output.

### **Responsibilities of Staff**

- To follow all Staff procedures, including timely and accurate submission of travel and other expense claims.
- Only using the expense reclaim procedure for recovering necessary out-of-pocket expenses
- To comply with all processes around time recording (and where necessary 'clocking in and out').
- To check the amount paid and highlight to Managers any discrepancies from expectations in a timely manner.

## 2. Income Collection and Management

### What is Income Collection and Management?

These are the processes involved with collecting money from individuals and organisations in return for services provided by the Company. Some services may be charged in advance (such as membership fees), some at the time of delivery and others charged after the service has been provided (where the customer receives an invoice). Income can be collected in a variety of ways – it can be paid in cash at the Company's tills, taken as card payments (either at site, via internet or over phone), bank transfers or through direct debits (or other automatic periodic bank transfer process). It may receive funding from the Council as a management fee or for specific services provided.

### Why is Income Collection and Management important?

The ongoing financial viability of the Company is dependent on income collected meeting the expenditure requirements.

In order to ensure that cash flow is maximised and costs are minimised, it is essential that income is collected in as complete and timely manner as is possible. This would normally be at the point of sale or service (or in advance in terms of memberships).

### Key Controls

- All income due to the Company is legitimate, recorded and charged correctly, in accordance with current price schedules, which are reviewed regularly.
- Value Added Tax (VAT) where applicable is calculated at the appropriate rate must be levied and collected in line with VAT guidance.
- All payments taken in person at point of sale are immediately put through the appropriate recording device (normally a till system).
- All tills are totalled at the end of day, any discrepancies recorded and stored securely within a Company safe until cash is collected.
- There is adequate separation in duties in the overall recording, reconciliation and banking processes.
- Amount of money stored each safe never exceeds the insured maximum for that safe.
- No cash collected should ever be used directly to pay for goods or services – any emergency expenditure should go through the proper ordering process or employee expenses.
- All debtor invoices must be raised via the Company's financial systems. Invoices raised need to be appropriate and legitimate and are calculated correctly and sent out promptly.
- Effective action is taken to pursue non-payment within defined timescales.
- Formal approval in accordance with the authorised limits (see Appendix A), for debt write-off is obtained.
- Appropriate accounting adjustments are made following write-off action within the financial systems.

- All appropriate income documents are retained and stored for the defined period in accordance with the document retention schedule.

### Responsibilities of Directors

- To agree and keep under review prices for the range of goods and services offered (or an agreed formula for determining a minimum price for more fluid stock items such as retail items)
- To agree approval requirements for bad debt within the Scheme of Delegation. To consider requests for debt write off values within their limits and recording reasons for the decision.
- To ensure effective systems are in place for:
  - collecting, recording, banking and reconciling cash;
  - collecting, recording and reconciling credit and debit card receipts;
  - collecting, recording and reconciling direct debit receipts; and
  - raising debt, chasing, recording, recovery and reconciling payments received for that debt.
- To arrange appropriate insurance for all Council safes, as necessary.

### Responsibilities of Managers

- To hold securely receipts, tickets and other records of income for the appropriate period.
- To lock away all income to safeguard against loss or theft, and to ensure the security of cash handling.
- To ensure that income is paid fully and promptly into the appropriate Authority bank account in the form in which it is received.
- To keep a record of all overs and shorts from till systems so that any necessary adjustments can be made in the financial systems.
- To approve and record the write off for any debt within their approved limit, including recording the reason for the decision.
- To ensure all staff involved in income collection and management have been appropriately trained.

### Responsibilities of Finance Support

- To advise on the applicability of VAT on charges.
- To support reconciliation processes between the bank account and financial systems.
- To develop, test and oversee interfaces between any financial systems.
- Support the process of securing insurance for cash on the premises / in safes.

### Responsibilities of Staff

- To follow standard procedures for taking payments and raising debtor invoices, using the systems and tools provided

- To ensure that sundry debtor invoices are raised promptly, and the debt is supported by sufficient documentary evidence and chased in the event of non-payment.

### 3. Ordering and Payment of Works, Goods and Services

#### What is Ordering and Payment for Goods and Services?

This is the method of the Company purchasing goods and services. Usually this will follow an ordering process, where an order is a formal instruction requesting goods and services for which a payment will be given. Exceptions may be allowed for specific goods or services or suppliers, (for example specific store cards for emergency items or where payment have been agreed to be taken by direct debit such as for bank charges), but these exceptions will be agreed in advance.

#### Why is ordering and payment important?

Orders create a contractual obligation for the Company for paying for goods and services. In turn these items are essential to providing goods and services to the customers of the Company. It is therefore essential that processes exist to ensure that control is contained over expenditure, but not in a way that inhibits the operations of the Company.

There have been numerous examples nationally of fraud committed by third parties requesting changes to supplier bank accounts and having the accounts changed to their benefit. It is essential that controls exist to prevent this.

#### Key Controls

- All goods and services are approved for ordering only by appropriate persons and are correctly recorded in the financial systems.
- Goods and services received are checked to ensure they are in accordance with the order.
- Payments are not made unless a valid purchase order is provided, goods have been received by the Authority to the correct prices, quantity and quality standards unless in exceptional circumstances as agreed by the Chief Finance Officer.
- Normal method for payments is via BACs, exceptions will be agreed in advance.
- All expenditure, including VAT is accurately recorded against the right budget and errors are identified and corrected. If VAT is being re-claimed there is a need to ensure that it is appropriate to do so, and a VAT invoice is provided.
- All invoices are addressed to the Company.
- Changes to any supplier's bank details are independently verified before making a change.

#### Responsibilities of Directors

- To ensure the Company's main financial systems are sound and capable of processing and recording ordering and payments.

- To agree limits for Managers to approve orders and any exceptions to this.
- To approve orders for amounts above delegated limits of Managers and ensuring that these are appropriately coded within the core financial systems of the Company.
- To ensure that value for money can be demonstrated for all purchases – the exact approach in each case will be determined by the value of the purchase and the number of suppliers able to offer the goods or services.

### **Responsibilities of Managers**

- To ensure new suppliers are only created in the system via approval and with evidence of bank details provided on letter headed paper.
- To ensure that unless a valid exception exists, all goods or services are purchased via an approved purchase order, issued from the Company's financial systems.
- To approve orders for amounts within delegated limits
- Ensuring all orders are appropriately coded within the core financial systems of the Company
- To ensure all orders placed can be met within the expected budgetary constraints of the Company.
- To establish processes for identifying need for re-ordering regularly used goods and services and/or thresholds for re-ordering.
- To ensure processes existing for effective stock control.
- Where a non-standard payment process is used to purchase goods or services, to ensure that payment for all such goods and services are reflected in the overall Financial Systems of the Company.

### **Responsibilities of Finance Support**

- To provide advice upon suitability of reclaiming of VAT.
- Support Managers to ensure the Financial Systems of the Company include any non-standard payment for goods and services is reflected in the Financial Systems of the Company (e.g. payments direct from bank account such as direct debits out from the Company account).

### **Responsibilities of Staff**

- To follow the approved process for ordering goods and services and inventory control.
- To identify the need for re-ordering goods and services in a timely manner.
- To check receipt of goods and services for completeness, suitability / damage upon receipt and notify Managers of any issues.
- To confirm directly and independently of any direct correspondence with a supplier before making changes to a supplier's bank details (via contacting them via previously recorded email or phone contact details).

## 4. Procurement Limits and Contract Procedure Rules

### What are Procurement Limits and Contract Procedure Rules?

As a wholly-owned Council company LeisureSK Ltd has adopted and will adhere to South Kesteven District Council's Contract Procedures Rules. These rules will aim to achieve value for money in the purchase of goods and services and ensure that any procurement activity directly contributes to the achievement of the company's success.

### Why are Procurement Limits and Contract Procedure Rules important?

It is important that any expenditure incurred by the company follows a high-quality procurement process which manages risk and helps to deliver quality and value. When undertaking procurement activity the Company must:

- Be fair to all bidders
- Be proportionate
- Not discriminate
- Be open and transparent with regard to its intentions and how bidders will be treated
- Treat all bidders and potential bidders equally
- Follow the Company processes and not deviate from them.

### Procurement Limits

#### Under £10,000

- At least one written quotation must be sought although, as value for money is a primary concern, it would be preferable to obtain more than one.
- Quotations received must include all relevant information including a description of the good and services or works to be supplied, the total value of the requirement and the relevant payment terms.

#### Between £10,000 and £49,999

- At least three comparable quotations must be sought, with at least one of the suppliers being local.
- If less than three potential suppliers can be identified, there must be a written record kept of the reason for this.
- Quotations received must include all relevant information including a description of the goods and services or works to be supplied, the total value of the requirement and the relevant payment terms.
- An evaluation of the quotes must be carried out and this information retained along with the rationale for appointing the winning bidder.

### £50,000 and above

- Expert procurement advice must be secured, either through the Council or by commissioning a specialist consultant adviser.

### **Key Controls**

- The procurement limits and contract procedure rules have been adopted by the Board of Directors and circulated to all staff who place orders for goods and services.
- The Board of Directors have each disclosed any other offices they hold or professional interests.

### **Responsibilities of Directors**

- To ensure that the Company's procurement rules procedures are followed at all times.
- To periodically review the Company's procurement procedures and limits, making adjustments when necessary.
- To submit details to fellow Directors of any existing appointments or knowledge which may constitute a conflict of interest or provide personal gain.
- To update fellow Directors on any new appointments or information which may constitute a conflict of interest as and when these arise.
- To declare any conflict of interest at the start of any Board meeting pertaining to the business of the meeting, or at any time during a Board meeting.

### **Responsibilities of Managers**

- To follow the Company's procurement rules and procedures.
- To circulate the Company's procurement rules and procedures to all staff responsible for purchasing goods, services and works.
- To undertake any necessary procurement training and ensure procurement training is provided for any relevant staff.
- To ensure all relevant records are maintained and kept in a central location which is easily accessible.
- To report any breach of the Company's procurement rules and procedures to the Board of Directors.

### **Responsibilities of Finance Support**

- To provide ad hoc advice and support for any procurement related queries.
- To report to the Board of Directors any suspected activity which has not followed the Company's procurement rules and procedures.

## Responsibilities of Staff

- To follow the Company's procurement rules and procedures.
- To keep appropriate records for procurement related activity.

## 5. Asset Management

### What is Asset Management?

Asset Management is the system of monitoring and maintaining items of value to the Company. Asset management is a systematic process of operating, maintaining, upgrading and disposing of assets cost-effectively.

Asset Management relates to land and buildings; furniture, vehicles and equipment; and stocks and stores. It covers their acquisition, disposal, security and recording.

### Why is Asset Management important?

The company provides services through the assets they operate, with interactions from the staff. It is therefore vital that the buildings remain fit for purpose and the equipment is up-to-date and in a good state of repair. If the Company is not responsible for repairs and maintenance themselves, making others aware of defects as soon as possible will ensure that any deficiencies are rectified quickly.

### Key Controls

- Inventories are in place to record all assets over a financial threshold (see Appendix A).
- Managers are responsible for the care, protection and security of assets within their control.
- Regular recorded checks are made on state of repair of buildings and key plant and equipment.
- Processes are in place to determine whether to purchase or lease equipment provides better value for money.

### Responsibilities of Directors

- To set policy on lease or purchase criteria for key equipment.
- That suitable approval is sought from the Council for leasing equipment, where that is deemed to be the best commercial choice for the Company.

### Responsibilities of Managers

- To maintain proper security, care and protection of all building, equipment, vehicles, stocks, stores and cash under their control.
- To ensure regular recorded checks are made on state of repair of buildings and key plant and equipment.

### Responsibilities of Finance Support

- To ensure appropriate accounting entries are made for the addition and depreciation of assets into the Company's financial statements.

### Responsibilities of Staff

- To identify and promptly report any defects in the conditions of buildings, plant or equipment.
- To follow any standard operating procedures provided in the safe operation of plant and equipment

## 6. Insurance

### What is Insurance?

Insurance for the Company is, in many ways, similar to the insurance that private individuals take out to protect items that they either:

- cannot replace easily; or
- are required to insure as a condition of purchase, i.e. a house purchased via a mortgage etc.
- where there is a benefit from risk pooling ie there is an event that is unlikely to happen but the cost if it did would be likely to bankrupt the company

Where the Company believes it is not value for money to manage risks internally, or cannot effectively eliminate a risk, it will take out insurance in the same way a private individual would, e.g. the Company insures its buildings, its Directors and Staff, and cover for members of the public when using Council facilities (public liability) etc.

### Why is Insurance important?

Insurance is a major area within risk management, enabling risks from unfortunate events to have less of a negative effect due to taking out cover policies. However, insurance is not without a cost, and risk mitigation and risk prevention is always preferable to paying higher premiums, where this is possible.

### Key Controls

- Adequate insurance is in place to cover assets of the organisation.
- Policies are reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that they continue to provide adequate cover for the Company confirm compliance with any/all requirements.
- Procedures are in place to investigate claims within required timescales.
- Acceptable levels of risk are determined and insured against where appropriate.
- Directors' liability insurance and public liability insurance is maintained throughout all trading periods

### Responsibilities of Directors

- To ensure that the Authority has the appropriate insurance cover in place.
- To inform Managers of any conditions affecting insured risks.
- To review all insurances in consultation with appropriate Managers and Finance Support either annually or when necessary.

### **Responsibilities of Managers**

- To ensure that any conditions affecting insured risks are met and that no actions taken by the Company nor working practices invalidate any claims.
- To ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities about insurance policies and particularly any actions that might invalidate insurance.
- To identify and report to the Directors any amendments which could be required for the insurance of the Company.
- To notify the Directors and any specialist Financial Support immediately of any loss, liability or damage that may lead to a claim against the Company, together with any information or explanation required.
- To ensure that they, nor any staff admit liability or make any offer to pay compensation that may prejudice the assessment of liability in respect of any insurance claim.

### **Responsibilities of Finance Support**

- Supporting the procurement, evaluation and documentation required for purchasing or renewing insurance.
- Supporting and advising on any claims.

### **Responsibilities of Staff**

- Never to admit liability or make any offer to pay compensation that may prejudice the assessment of liability in respect of any insurance claim.
- Inform management in a timely manner of any actions that may result in a claim against the Company.
- Following standard procedures to avoid invalidating any insurance.
- Documenting any accidents or near misses in line with Health and Safety procedures.

## **7. Taxation**

### **What is Taxation?**

Taxation are fees paid to Central Government (either directly or indirectly) to support Government spending. The expected taxes the Company will pay are:

- Value Added Tax (VAT);
- Income Tax and National Insurance;
- Insurance Premium Tax; and
- Corporation Tax (on companies it controls)

## Why is Taxation important?

Like all organisations, the Company is responsible for ensuring its tax affairs are in order. Tax issues are often very complex and the penalties for incorrectly accounting for tax are severe. It is therefore very important for all Directors and Staff to be aware of their role.

### Key Controls

- Managers are provided with the relevant information and kept up to date on tax issues.
- All taxable transactions are identified, properly carried out and accounted for within stipulated timescales.
- Returns are made to the appropriate Authorities within the stipulated timescale.

### Responsibilities of Directors

- To ensure that the overall processes, procedures and systems of the Company are sufficient to allow the timely and accurate completion of all required tax computations and payments.
- To ensure all records are retained and stored in accordance with document management procedures.

### Responsibilities of Managers

- To ensure that the correct VAT liability is attached to all income due.

### Responsibilities of Finance Support

- To support the Company in completing relevant tax returns, in line with deadlines (including VAT, Corporation tax and Pay as You Earn from payroll).
- To provide up-to-date guidance for Directors and Staff on taxation issues, which could impact the Company.

### Responsibilities of Staff

- To ensure proper processes and systems are followed to ensure that tax computations are complete – whether this is the ordering system, income / banking systems or payroll / time-recording related systems.

## 8. Preventing and detecting Fraud and Corruption (including Bribery)

## What is Fraud and Corruption?

The Fraud Act 2006 defines three separate ways of committing fraud:

- Fraud by false representation;
- Fraud by failing to disclose information; and
- Fraud by abuse of position.

“Dishonesty” and “intent to make gain or cause loss” are core themes involved in the committing of fraud.

Corruption is ‘the offering, giving, soliciting, or acceptance of an inducement or reward, or showing any favour or disfavour which may influence any person to act improperly.’ It is an offence under the Prevention of Corruption Acts 1889 – 1916, as amended.

Bribery can be described as giving someone a financial inducement or other form of advantage to encourage that person to perform their functions or activities improperly, or to reward that person for having already done so, in order to gain a personal, commercial, regulatory or contractual advantage.

During day to day work, there may be times when Staff members are offered gifts and/or hospitality; for example, a meal, a ‘thank you’ present or gift or a trip to a sporting event. This may lead to perceived or actual preference in terms of service offered or provider selected, leading to suspicions of bribery. In the interests of transparency, any material gift should be logged.

## Why is Preventing Fraud and Corruption important?

The Company is providing public services on behalf of the Council, partially funded by a management fee from the Council. It is an expectation and requirement that all Directors, Managers, Staff, consultants and contractors be fair, honest and act with the utmost of integrity at all times.

The Directors are resolute that the culture and tone of is one of honesty and opposition to fraud and corruption. There is an expectation and requirement that all individuals, businesses and organisations dealing in any way with the Company will act with high standards of probity, openness and integrity and that the Company and its agent(s) at all levels will lead by example in these matters. Maintenance of a register of gifts supports these standards and can support the Company’s defence against claims of acting in a biased manner.

## Key Controls

- The Company should maintain a culture of zero tolerance to fraud and corruption.
- All relevant legislation should be complied with including the Fraud Act 2006 and the Bribery Act 2010
- The Company should maintain an adequate internal control framework.
- All Directors, Managers and Staff should act with integrity and lead by example.

- Staff should raise any concerns that they may have about fraud and corruption preferably with their line manager or another Manager.
- Any information reported by Staff will be dealt with fairly and confidentially.
- Whistle blowing procedures should be in place and operating effectively.
- Managers are required to deal swiftly and firmly with those who defraud or attempt to defraud the Authority or who are corrupt.
- Maintenance of a gifts / hospitalities and register of interests.

### **Responsibilities of Directors**

- To maintain adequate and effective procedures designed to minimise the risk of fraud, bribery and corruption
- To determine the most appropriate methods and frequency of testing controls (including the need for internal and external audit – over any minimum requirement mandated by the Council as Company owner).
- To review all reported suspected irregularities reported to the Directors.
- To maintain a register of outside interests that could impact on decision making (including gifts / hospitality received).
- To ensure that all decisions taken as a Director of the Company are made in the best interests of the Company.

### **Responsibilities of Managers**

- To ensure that all suspected irregularities are reported to the Directors without delay.
- To instigate the Company's disciplinary procedures where the outcome of an investigation into suspected fraud or corruption indicates that improper behaviour has taken place.
- To ensure that where financial impropriety is discovered, the Council is informed.
- To take advice and support from areas such as Finance and HR before referring matters to the Police for cases where it is apparent that a criminal offence may have been committed.
- Maintain a register of gifts / hospitality for all Managers and Staff

### **Responsibilities of Finance Support**

- To support management in the investigation of any alleged or discovered areas of potential breach.

### **Responsibilities of Staff**

- To ensure that all suspected irregularities are reported to Managers without delay.
- To follow all standard procedures to safeguard against accusations of impropriety.
- To ensure all gifts / hospitality valued over an agreed threshold (see Appendix A) is recorded within the register of gifts / hospitality.

## 9. The 5-Year Business Case

### What is the 5-Year Business Case?

The **5-Year Business Case** is the document setting out the medium-term ambition of the Company, key objectives, targets, market analysis and financial projections.

### Why is the 5-Year Business Case important?

The **5-Year Business Case** will provide the main strategic document setting out how the Company will meet its contractual obligations for service delivery with South Kesteven District Council. It should form the basis for strategic service planning and support investment, pricing and service delivery changes. It should also underpin the shorter-term **Annual Plan** and form the basis of projecting changes to management fee paid / required from South Kesteven District Council.

### Key Controls

- The strategy is reviewed annually including:
  - changes to the operating environment
  - changes to services offered
  - changes in demographics or other factors influencing demand
  - changes to forecasts due to refurbishment or other changes to the managed centres

### Responsibilities of Directors

- Ensuring that the document is reviewed at least annually
- Approving the revised document

### Responsibilities of Managers

- Feeding in known changes to services / environment
- Aligning team / individual objectives to overall strategic approach

### Responsibilities of Finance Support

- Ensuring financial estimates contained within are reasonable
- Providing support as required to develop the financial elements of the document

### Responsibilities of Staff

- Understand how own role fits in with overall strategy of Company

## 10. Annual Financial Plan & Budget

### **What is the Annual Financial Plan & Budget?**

This sets out the plan for the upcoming financial year. It sets out in detail the expected activity levels and budgets for each centre, split by activities.

### **Why is the Annual Financial Plan & Budget important?**

This document forms the basis of budget management through the upcoming financial year. It will be used to measure financial performance of the Company and as a basis to consider the impact of changes as needed during the year. This will also determine the expected management charge payable or receivable from the Council.

### **Key Controls**

- An approved annual finance plan and budget should be approved by Directors before the start of the trading period that it relates
- The accounting system should be updated with the budgets agreed as part of this document and it should be possible to trace back to this original budget, even if subsequently amended

### **Responsibilities of Directors**

- To approve the annual financial plan and budget
- To ensure that the budget developed is realistic, achievable and reflects the requirements of the leisure services contract with the Council

### **Responsibilities of Managers**

- Providing evidence for budget setting decisions
- Agreeing any budgets that they are responsible for

### **Responsibilities of Finance Support**

- Supporting the budget setting process (such as measuring the impact of factors such as price increases, inflation and salary changes)
- Uploading the budget into the financial accounting system

### **Responsibilities of Staff**

- Feeding in suggestions for service changes

## **11. Budget Control and Monitoring**

### **What is Budget Monitoring and Control?**

A budget is the planned income and expenditure for the company sub-divided by service area and category. Budgetary control and monitoring is the process used by budget managers with Finance Support, to review income and expenditure against their budgets, and forecast these to the end of the financial year.

### **Why is Budget Monitoring and Control important?**

Budget monitoring ensures that once the budget has been approved by Directors, resources allocated are used for their intended purposes. It allows for corrective actions to be taken if it appears the budgets and forecast for the year are looking to diverge in a meaningful way.

To assist with the above it is essential that quality information is available to budget managers to ensure that sound financial decisions can be made, especially where spending may differ from planned expenditure.

To ensure that the Council meets in financial targets, each Service manager is responsible for hitting agreed budgetary targets for income and remaining within budgeted expenditure levels or identifying as soon as possible when those targets may not be achieved and potential courses of corrective action.

### **Key Controls**

- Managers should be responsible only for budgets relating to income and expenditure that they can influence
- There should be a person responsible for each area of income and expenditure – this could be split by location and/or category
- Budget managers accept accountability for their budgets, the level of service to be delivered and understand their financial responsibilities
- Income and expenditure are properly recorded and accounted for
- Performance levels / levels of service are monitored in conjunction with the budget and necessary action is taken to align service outputs and budget

### **Responsibilities of Directors**

- To receive regular summarised reports of the overall income and expenditure position of the company
- To agree corrective actions needed to bring income and expenditure back in line with budgets
- To agree changes to budgets where corrective action is not deemed appropriate (this would include plans for utilising higher than expected income levels)

### **Responsibilities of Managers**

- Checking financial reports to check that income and expenditure levels appear to be an accurate reflection of activities

- Querying or investigating any observed anomalies identified in reports (such as missing income or expenditure incorrectly assigned to a budget within their responsibility)

### **Responsibilities of Finance Support**

- Supporting the reporting cycle as necessary
- Developing and maintaining reports for Directors and Managers that enable them to fulfil their responsibilities (in consultation with them to understand their requirements)

### **Responsibilities of Staff**

- To follow correct finance procedures to ensure all income and expenditure can be recorded and monitored in a timely and accurate manner

## **12. Annual Statement of Accounts**

### **What is the Annual Statement of Accounts?**

The Annual Statement of Accounts is a financial summary of the state of the financial affairs of the Company, usually over the course of a year. The Company is required to comply with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). Regulations set out the date that these have to be approved and a copy provided to Companies House. Unless an exemption applies, these will be available as a public document.

### **Why is the Annual Statement of Accounts important?**

Companies are legally obliged to produce an annual statement of accounts unless very specific criteria are met (such as being a dormant company). In addition, as a wholly owned company of the Council it is important for transparency to show that public assets and resources are being used appropriately. The annual statement of accounts gives one such way of demonstrating this.

### **Key Controls**

- The accounts are completed and presented from the Companies core financial systems by a qualified accountant
- The accounts are signed off by the Directors
- Suitable checks are made on the integrity of the accounts, including if deemed necessary (or required by law), independent external audit

### **Responsibilities of Directors**

- To approve the annual statement of accounts

- To decide the appropriate level of validation of the accounts, in accordance with legal requirements, contractual requirements and appropriate risk analysis

### **Responsibilities of Managers**

- Responding to requests for information as necessary as part of the development of the accounts
- Accurate and timely completion of necessary paperwork to allow any accounting estimates to be made at the end of the year (such as estimating income and expenditure due but not yet ordered / billed)

### **Responsibilities of Finance Support**

- Preparing the annual accounts in accordance with legislation and accounting best practice
- Requesting information required to make any necessary accounting adjustments and estimates for the year end
- Investigating and resolving any potential areas of discrepancy found during the preparation of the accounts

### **Responsibilities of Staff**

- To follow correct finance procedures to ensure all income and expenditure can be recorded and monitored in a timely and accurate manner

## **13. Information Management & Information Security**

### **What are Information Management & Information Security?**

Information Management & Information Security are the processes around collecting and storing data and holding it securely. Information management details the processes around how data is held, how it is used and combined. Information security is primarily about how that data is secured and disclosed.

### **Why are Information Management & Information Security important?**

These are important as the Company is trusted with information from customers and the expect this to be only used for the purposes it was collected and trust that it will be held securely. Data breaches can undermine customer confidence and lead to the Company being fined.

### **Key Controls**

- All electronic systems are password protected and each Staff member approved to access has their own password

- Passwords are regularly updated and Staff leaving the Company are removed from access lists promptly
- All systems and payment channels involving taking payments from credit and/or debit cards has an up-to-date Card Payment Industries self-assessment questionnaire completed.
- Customers are informed of what their data will be used for at time of collection and these are the only purposes that this data is then used.

### **Responsibilities of Directors**

- To ensure policies and processes comply with all relevant legislation (including the Data Protection Act).
- Initiating investigation for any suspected data breaches and notifying relevant authorities of any confirmed breach

### **Responsibilities of Managers**

- To provide appropriate training to staff on appropriate use of systems.
- Ensuring starters and leavers get the access to systems that they need.
- Identifying and reporting to Directors any potential data breaches.

### **Responsibilities of Finance Support**

- Supporting changes promptly to access to various IT systems upon an authorised request

### **Responsibilities of Staff**

- Only using systems in line with processes and training
- Using only their own user log-ons to all IT systems operated by the Company

## **14. Financial Systems**

### **What are Financial Systems?**

Financial systems are all computerised systems that directly or via interface is responsible for generating payments to or from the Company.

### **Why are Financial Systems Important?**

Financial Systems are where details of all transactions with the Company are held. It is important that these are accurate so that the underlying transactions are correct.

### **Key Controls**

- Access control and security of the Council's Financial systems should be maintained.

- Systems should be reconciled periodically to ensure consistency of data stored within.

### Responsibilities of Directors

- Consider the need and impact of changes to any aspect of the overall financial systems.
- Ensure appropriate testing of new financial systems and testing of interfaces between systems prior to their introduction.
- Ensure appropriate reconciliation between all financial systems.
- Effective contingency and disaster recovery arrangements exist for all computerised systems, to include; back-up / rollback and processes to deal to an interruption to the system.

### Responsibilities of Managers

- Ensure all input is genuine, complete, accurate, timely and not previously processed.
- All processing is carried out in a complete, accurate and timely manner.
- Output from all systems is complete, accurate and timely in an agreed format.
- Ensure systems are documented and staff trained in the operation of them.
- Correct any errors identified during the interfacing or reconciliation processes.

### Responsibilities of Finance Support

- Supporting reconciliations, report running and investigating any discrepancies between systems

### Responsibilities of Staff

- Only using systems in line with processes and training
- Using only their own user log-ons to all IT systems operated by the Company

## 15. Data & Document Retention

### What is Data & Document Retention?

Laws and best practice provide requirements and guidelines for the retention and maintenance of data & documents, along with details as to how long they should be kept. A Document Retention Policy provides a systematic way of deciding to keep or destroy documents which have been received or created in the course of business. It gives guidance on how long documents should be kept and when they should be destroyed.

### Why is Data & Documents Retention important?

Data & Document Retention is important as information is a primary resource of a business, allowing it to forecast demand and project income and expenditure. However,

this information should be reviewed to ensure it is only used for purposes it was collected and destroyed when no longer relevant.

It also provides a means of supplying evidence which verifies that income and expenditure recorded in the Company's financial statements is valid, accurate and complete. External organisations also require such confidence. There are strict guidelines and legal requirements in place to satisfy bodies such as HMRC.

### **Key Controls**

- An understandable, complete and clearly communicated Document Retention Policy is in place (see Appendix B).
- Evidence of application of the Document Retention Policy

### **Responsibilities of Directors**

- To ensure that a comprehensive Document Retention Policy is in place and this is in line with statutory guidance.

### **Responsibilities of Managers**

- To ensure compliance with the Document Retention Policy within their services.
- To recommend any changes to the Document Retention Policy based upon operational needs

### **Responsibilities of Finance Support**

- Supporting in the development of reports from systems to identify electronic records to delete and/or automate the deletion process

### **Responsibilities of Staff**

- Following agreed principles – particularly ensuring locally held copies of information are destroyed in line with guidance (such as emails and copies in personal / hard drives of computers).

## APPENDIX A – AUTHORISED LIMITS, EXCEPTIONS AND OTHER FINANCIAL THRESHOLDS

Operationally there are a series of decisions that are required to allow the Company to operate efficiently without seeking approval from Directors every time (for example raising orders or writing off bad debt). This appendix sets out limits and responsibilities for these matters and any exceptions to the standard limits. The amounts provided are the limits per transaction, however transactions should not be arbitrarily split to circumvent these limits. The Directors are responsible for maintaining this document to maintain operational effectiveness.

These limits should be read in conjunction with the Member Consent Matters forming part of the Member's Agreement between LeisureSK Limited and South Kesteven District Council. Any limits within the Member Consent Matters takes precedent and must be referred to the South Kesteven District Council for consent in advance to finalising any decision.

### Ordering Approval Limits (Sections 1 & 3 of Financial Regulations)

The following table sets out the limit per transaction for raising orders, approving invoices (without an order) and approving expenses to employees; noting that no payment should be split into smaller components to circumvent these limits.

Authorised By:	Authorised Limit for Orders & Invoices £	Authorised Limit for Expenses £
Duty Manager	Up to £250	Not applicable
General Manager	£251 - £1000	Up to £100
Contract Manager / Head of Service	£1001 - £5,000	£101 - £500
Director	Over £5,000	Over £500

The Directors can, based upon a satisfactory explanation of need, agree an increase for officer(s) within a business area, for any amount they choose.

### Current Exceptions to limits (Section 3 of Financial Regulations)

The following categories of expenditure can be approved up to an unlimited amount by a General Manager, subject to use of an approved supplier:

- Utilities
- Pool chemicals

### **Goods and Services exempted from Standard Ordering Process (Section 3 of the Financial Regulations)**

The following expenditure is subject to direct debit or other direct bank payment and is thus exempted from standard ordering processes:

- WorldPay (for card processing transactions)
- Transaction Services Group (for managing Direct Debits with customers)
- Natwest (for company banking services)

Amounts up to £100 for one off or emergency goods can be purchased via an approved LeisureSK Ltd corporate account card holder, established for the following companies:

- Argos

### **Bad Debt Write-Off (Section 2 of Financial Regulations)**

All debt proposed for write off, should be proposed by a Staff member and approved, depending upon the amount by either a Manager or Director. The proposal should include the reason and if actions will be taken to prevent raising debt with the same customer again.

Proposed by:	Authorised By:	Delegated Limit (per debt)
		£
General Manager	Contract Manager / Head of Service	Up to £500
General Manager	Director	£500 or more

### **Threshold for Recording Gifts and Hospitality (Section 1 of Financial Regulations)**



The threshold for recording gifts & hospitality for Members and Staff is £25.

**Inventory Threshold Limit (Section 4 of Financial Regulations)**

The materiality limit for items to be included on the inventory is where the (estimated) purchase price at new is £250 or over.

## APPENDIX B – RECOMMENDED PERIODS FOR THE RETENTION OF RECORDS

Type of Document	Retention Period (Years)
<b>Accountancy/Financial</b>	
Abstract of accounts	6
Audited accounts	Retain indefinitely
Budgetary control records	6
Costing records	6
Estimate working papers	2
Financial ledgers	6
Grant claim records	6
Investment records	2
Journals	6
Leasing records	2
VAT claims	6
VAT records	3
<b>Bank Related Records</b>	
Bank paying-in books/slips	6
Bank reconciliation	6
Bank statements	6

Paid cheques	4
<b>Contracts</b>	
Final accounts of contracts executed under hand	6
Final accounts of contracts executed under seal	12
Successful tenders	3 years after final payment
Unsuccessful tenders	Retain until final payment is made
<b>Creditor Records</b>	
Copy orders	2
Credit notes	6
Creditor invoices	6
Delivery notes	2
Imprest documentation	2
Periodic payment records	6
<b>External Funding</b>	
Funding documentation and associated invoice/ payment details	6 years or in accordance with the terms of the individual grant requirements
<b>Income Records</b>	
Cash books	6
Correspondence (income)	2
Debtor accounts (records non-current)	2
Income posting slips and tabulations	2
LeisureSK Limited Financial Regulations January 2021	30

Periodic income records	2
Receipt books	2
Record of receipt books issued	2
Registrar's quarterly returns	2
Sales records	2
<b>Miscellaneous Records</b>	
Annual report	Retain indefinitely
Copies of Board minutes	6
Stock lists	2
Travel claims	6
Valuation lists	Retain indefinitely
<b>Insurance Records</b>	
Expired insurance contracts	Retain indefinitely
Insurance claims	6
Insurance policy documentation	Retain indefinitely
Insurance register	Retain indefinitely
<b>Payroll</b>	
BACS amendments and output	3
Building society tabulations	3
Copy payslips	6

Correspondence	6
Life certificates (pensions)	2
Monthly BACS listing	3
NI file cashbook	2
NI number changes	2
Payroll adjustment documentation	6
Part time employees' claim forms	6
Pensions personal records	Retain indefinitely
SSP records	4
Staff transfer records	6
Starters' forms	2
Superannuation Records	Retain indefinitely
Tax and NI records	6
Tax code notifications	2
Timesheets	6
Union documentation	2
Weekly BACS listings	3

**Note:**

- The period of years shown, relates to a complete period following the end of the financial year to which the record relates.
- No documents or records should be disposed of until notification has been received from the District Auditor of the completion of the audit of accounts for the year to which the records relate.

- If a suitable period of retention is in doubt, please refer to the Directors

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of the Local Government Act 1972.

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SOUTH  
KESTEVEN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL



## Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 18 June 2024

Report of Councillor Paul Stokes,  
Deputy Leader of the Council and  
Cabinet Member for Leisure and  
Culture

## Proposal to consider the formation of an Overview and Scrutiny Leisure Working Group

### Report Author

Karen Whitfield, Assistant Director – Leisure, Culture and Place

 [Karen.whitfield@southkesteven.gov.uk](mailto:Karen.whitfield@southkesteven.gov.uk)

### Purpose of Report

To respond to a request to form a Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Working Group to monitor the performance of LeisureSK Ltd.

### Recommendations

#### That the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

1. Agrees that reports relating to the performance of LeisureSK Ltd continue to be considered at future Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings rather than schedule additional working group meetings.

Decision Information	
Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities? <b>(delete as appropriate)</b>	Connecting Communities Effective Council
Which wards are impacted?	All Wards

## 1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

### ***Finance and Procurement***

- 1.1 There are no major financial considerations arising from this report. However, there are resource implications should administrative support be required for additional meetings.

Completed by: Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer

### ***Legal and Governance***

- 1.2 Should the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee be minded forming a sub-committee or working group then it is within their remit to do so. Typically, working groups would be formed as 'task and finish' type groups to consider short-term term projects, or topics with a specified start and end date.
- 1.3 Should the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee wish to form a working group consideration needs to be given as to how the information and debate can remain in the public arena, and how the working group is to be administered. This will need to be agreed and reflected in a Terms of Reference for the working group.

Completed by: Mandy Braithwaite, Legal Executive

## 2. Purpose of the Report

- 2.1 The remit of the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee includes the Leisure Service and monitoring the performance of LeisureSK Ltd.
- 2.2 At a meeting of the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 26 March 2024 a request was made to establish a separate working group to monitor the performance of LeisureSK Ltd. It was suggested that, as issues relating to LeisureSK Ltd took up a significant portion of the scrutiny meetings, this would allow the Committee time to fully debate other reports and topics.
- 2.3 Consideration has been given as to how a working group would operate. Attached to this report at **Appendix One** is a draft Terms of Reference for consideration by Members of the Committee.
- 2.4 The draft Terms of Reference provided requires further consideration to establish the following:
  - The proposed membership of the working group and how this would be agreed
  - The frequency of working group meetings
  - Whether formal reports would be required
  - Whether the meetings would remain in the public arena and be live streamed
  - What administrative support would be required
  - How information and discussions from the working group would be reported back to the main Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 2.5 Given the profile and importance of the subject matter it is recommended that reports and debate relating to the performance of LeisureSK Ltd remain on the agenda for the main Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings. This will allow all Committee members to receive the information and take part in the debate surrounding the performance of LeisureSK Ltd and will also ensure that the information which is publicly available can remain in the public arena.
- 2.6 Should additional meetings be required to discuss individual subjects or the performance of LeisureSK Ltd, the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee can schedule Extraordinary Meetings of the Committee as and when these are required. In addition, meetings can be scheduled for a longer duration should this be necessary to allow other reports to be fully debated.

## 3. Key Considerations

- 3.1 The performance of LeisureSK Ltd is a key issue for the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Therefore, it is valuable for all Members of the Committee to receive the same level of information relating to the performance of

LeisureSK Ltd and for them to be able to participate in the debate surrounding this key issue.

#### **4. Other Options Considered**

- 4.1 The options considered in a response to a request to form a working group are contained within the body of this report.

#### **5. Reasons for the Recommendations**

- 5.1 As detailed within this report retaining discussion and debate around the performance of LeisureSK Ltd at formal meetings of the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committees will ensure that information is publicly available.
- 5.2 Should additional meetings or extra time be required to discuss the performance of LeisureSK Ltd the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee can call for an Extraordinary Meeting or request to extend the duration of scheduled Committee meetings.

## **Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**18 June 2024**

### **Appendix One**

#### **Leisure SK Limited Working Group**

##### **Terms of Reference**

###### **1. Objectives**

The Leisure SK Limited Working Group is established by the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its objectives are to:

- Monitor the performance of Leisure SK Limited in the delivery of the Council's leisure provision
- Monitor the delivery of the Leisure SK Limited Business Plan
- Consider how leisure opportunities can be maximised through Leisure SK Limited
- Make any recommendations to the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee

###### **2. Membership**

The Working Group shall comprise:

- The Chairman of the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Members appointed by the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- The Council's Assistant Director (Leisure, Culture and Place)

The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure will be invited to attend and contribute to all meetings of the Working Group.

Other Members, Officers and third parties may also be invited to attend and contribute to meetings of the Working Group as and when deemed necessary by the Chairman of the Group. Such external parties may include:

- The Chairman of the Board of Leisure SK Limited
- Directors on the Board of Leisure SK Limited
- Employees of Leisure SK Limited

### **3. Chairman**

Meetings of the Working Group will be chaired by the Chairman of the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee or, in their absence, another Councillor elected from those Members in attendance.

### **4. Decision-making Powers**

This Working Group, as a Working Group established by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee, has no decision-making powers. The role of this Group will be to make recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet Member or Officers.

### **5. Rules of Procedure**

The Working Group will be held on a monthly basis, or as and when deemed necessary.

Agendas for meetings of the Working Group will be produced at least a week in advance of the date of the meeting.

Any Member of the Working Group may request items for inclusion on the agenda.

Progress and action notes of each meeting will be produced and presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a regular basis.

# Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2024/25

## WORK PROGRAMME

REPORT TITLE	OFFICER	PURPOSE	ORIGINATED/COMMITTEE HISTORY DATE(S)	CORPORATE/PRIORITY
<b>18 June 2024</b>				
Heritage Action Zone – Closure report	Lead Officer: Claire Saunders (High Street Heritage Action Zone Project Manager)			
Corporate Plan 2020-23 Key Performance Indicators End-of-plan and 2023/24 End-Year (Q4) Report	Lead Officer: Charles James (Policy Officer)	To outline performance against the Corporate Plan 2020-23 KPIs for Q4 2023/24 and present a summary of overall performance over the lifecycle of the Corporate Plan 2020-23.	Regular bi-annual item since 2020.	Effective Council
Play Area Strategy	Lead Officer: Michael Chester (Team Leader – Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces)	To consider the draft Play Area Strategy for South Kesteven		Connecting Communities
LeisureSK Ltd – Cabinet Actions	To provide an update on progress with the actions set by Cabinet in relation to LeisureSK Ltd including the work being undertaken to assess alternative management options.  Lead Officer: Karen Whitfield (Assistant Director for Leisure, Culture and Place)	To assess progress regarding the actions agreed by Cabinet in relation to LeisureSK Ltd	Agenda item agreed by the Chairman during Agenda setting meeting on 5 March 2024	Connecting Communities

REPORT TITLE	OFFICER	PURPOSE	ORIGINATED/COMMITTEE HISTORY DATE(S)	CORPORATE/PRIORITY
<b>Establishment of a Leisure Working Group</b>	To provide an update on the request to establish a working group to monitor the performance of LeisureSK Ltd  <b>Lead Officer: Karen Whitfield (Assistant Director for Leisure, Culture and Place)</b>	To consider the request and propose a way forward	As a result of discussion during the 26 March 2024 meeting	Connecting Communities
<b>Performance of Leisure SK (Projected outturn for 23/24 – LeisureSK Ltd)</b>	Update on the performance of LeisureSK Ltd  <b>Lead Officer: Debbie Roberts (Chairman of LeisureSK Ltd)</b>	To consider the performance of LeisureSK Ltd and provide an update on the financial outturn for LeisureSK Ltd for 2023/24	LeisureSK Ltd Performance Report last reviewed by the Culture and Visitor Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 28 March 2024	Connecting Communities

## 3 September 2024

<b>Update on Markets</b>	<b>Lead Officer: Kay Boasman (Head of Waste and Markets)</b>	To update the committee on the outcomes from the Market Review undertaken by the High Street Experts		Connecting Communities
<b>Performance of Leisure SK Ltd</b>	Update on the performance of LeisureSK Ltd  <b>Lead Officer: Debbie Roberts (Chairman of LeisureSK Ltd)</b>	To consider the performance of LeisureSK Ltd	LeisureSK Ltd Performance Report last reviewed by the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 28 March 2024	Connecting Communities
<b>Sport and Physical Activity Strategy Action Plan six-monthly update</b>	To provide an updated Sport and Physical Activity Strategy and to share progress on the previously agreed Action Plan  <b>Lead Officer: Karen Whitfield (Assistant Director for Leisure, Culture and Place)</b>	To scrutinise performance on how the Council, together with partners, is delivering improvements in the provision and participation levels of	This forms part of regular six-monthly updates which are provided to the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee.	Connecting Communities

REPORT TITLE	OFFICER	PURPOSE	ORIGINATED/COMMITTEE HISTORY DATE(S)	CORPORATE/PRIORITY
		sport and physical activity across the district		
<b>Result of Leisure Options Appraisal</b>	<b>Lead Officer: Karen Whitfield (Assistant Director for Leisure, Culture and Place)</b>	To assess the results of the leisure options appraisal to identify the Council's preferred leisure management arrangement from January 2026	The report follows on from the initial options identified and discussed at a meeting of the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Meeting held on 18 June 2024	Connecting Communities

## 28 November 2024

<b>Cultural Strategy Update</b>	<b>Lead Officer: Karen Whitfield (Assistant Director for Leisure, Culture and Place)</b>	To scrutinise performance of the Council's Arts and Cultural Service, including the implementation of the Cultural Strategy and achievement of the action plan	This forms part of regular six-monthly updates which are provided to the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee.	Connecting Communities
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## FUTURE ITEMS

## **REMIT**

The remit of the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be to work alongside Cabinet Members to assist with the development of policy and to scrutinise decisions in respect of, yet not limited to:

- Arts and Culture
- Heritage
- Markets and fairs
- Sport and physical activity
- Leisure SK Ltd
- Visitor Economy